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historic Gravetye Manor

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editor's letter



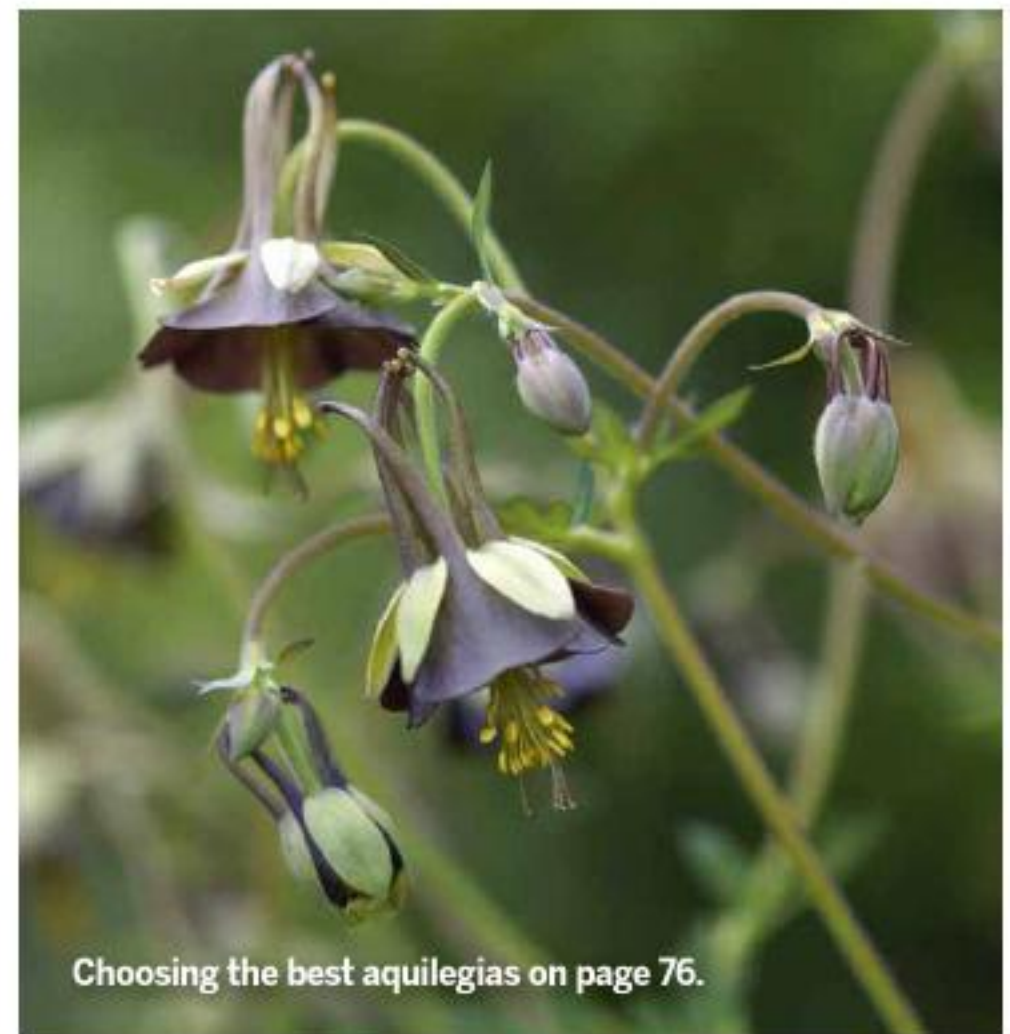
For many – myself included – Chelsea is the best flower show in the world. This year promises to be particularly memorable as 2013 marks the show's 100th anniversary. As ever, it will be packed full of interesting plants, innovative design and covetable products, and it's nigh-on impossible to take it all in. To help ensure you don't miss the key highlights we take you on a guided tour of this year's most

outstanding show gardens, plants, products and trends. We also look back at the show's fascinating history and while researching images in the RHS's extensive photographic archive for our feature, it became apparent just how much enthusiasm, hard work, expertise and devotion has gone into every show since 1913. This year also sees the return of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED's annual lecture during Chelsea week and on Tuesday 21 May, landscape critic, garden historian and Chelsea Fringe director Tim Richardson will be hosting a very special evening with designers Piet Oudolf and Jinny Blom. See www.gardensillustrated.com for details. In addition to our Chelsea coverage, we take a look at three outstanding English country gardens, including Gravetye Manor in West Sussex (where we are holding a reader event later in the year – see page 11 for details); provide inspiring planting ideas for containers; and take an in-depth look at the best aquilegias. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Julie



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED is available as a digital edition – search 'Gardens Illustrated' on the App Store, Google Play or Zinio.com



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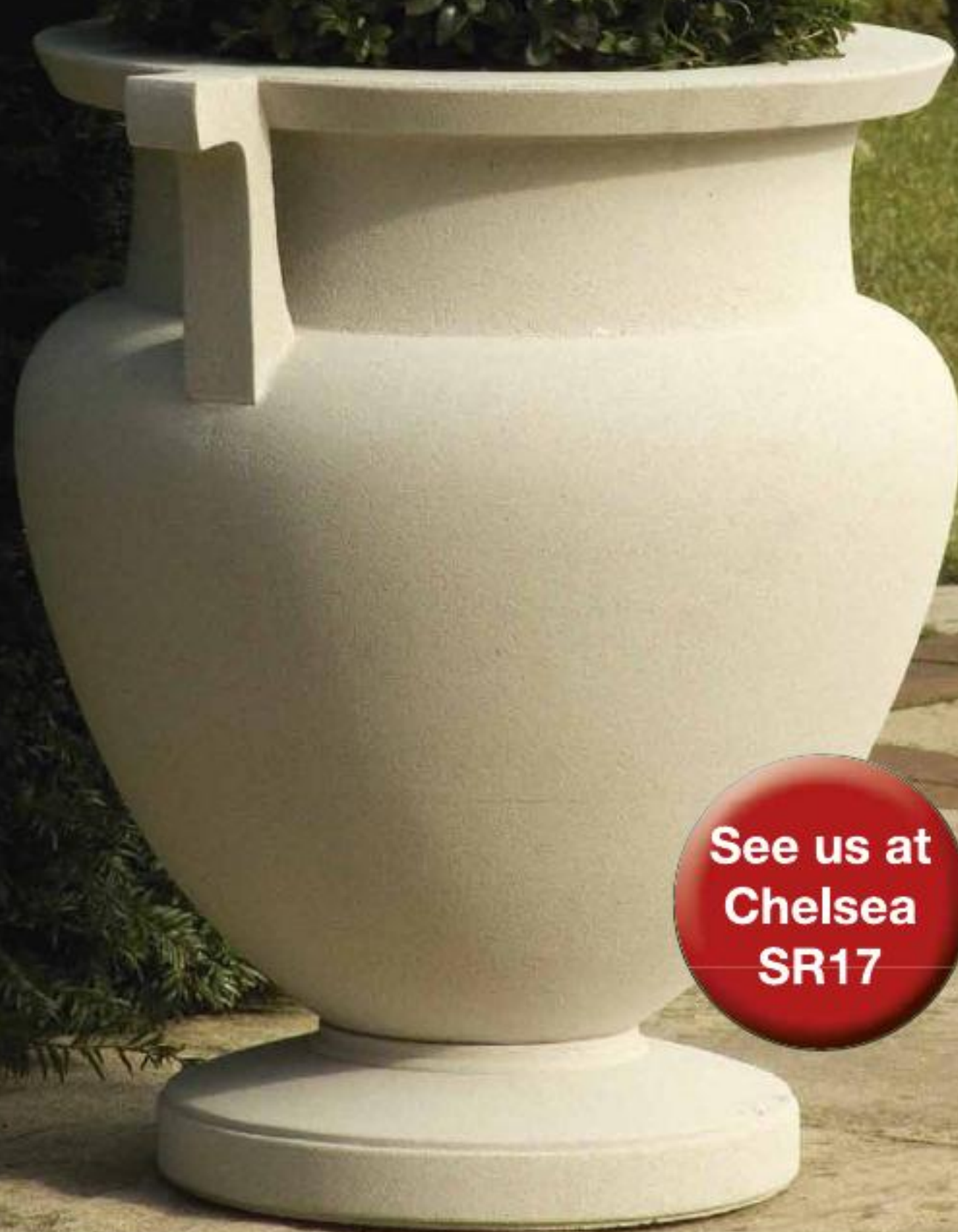
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• **Visit Melbourne** for the Australian Landscape Conference, 20-23 September, sponsored by GARDENS ILLUSTRATED – see page 106

* Offer applies to UK customers only.

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contributors



MARY KEEN

Mary is a writer and designer with regular columns in the *Telegraph* and *The Garden*. Her Gloucestershire garden is regularly open to groups from all over the world, as well as for the NGS in several seasons of the year. See her thoughts on Little House on page 86.

"Visiting a Rosemary Verey garden made me wonder what she would have made of the naturalistic borders in vogue today."



LYNN KEDDIE

A professional garden photographer for 14 years, Lynn's work can be seen in magazines and books worldwide. On page 86 you can see the results of her visit to Little House, designed by Rosemary Verey, just a stone's throw from Barnsley House.

"It was a treat to see this Verey-designed garden – all her trademarks were visible or faithfully restored by the owners."



RACHEL WARNE

Rachel started to include garden photography in her repertoire in 2004, and has been published widely in magazines as well as exhibiting, appearing on TV and producing two garden books. You can see the superb results of her visit to Gravetye Manor on page 62.

"Gravetye is as influential as it is beautiful, and photographing it was an honour as well as a joy."



SUSAN ELDERKIN

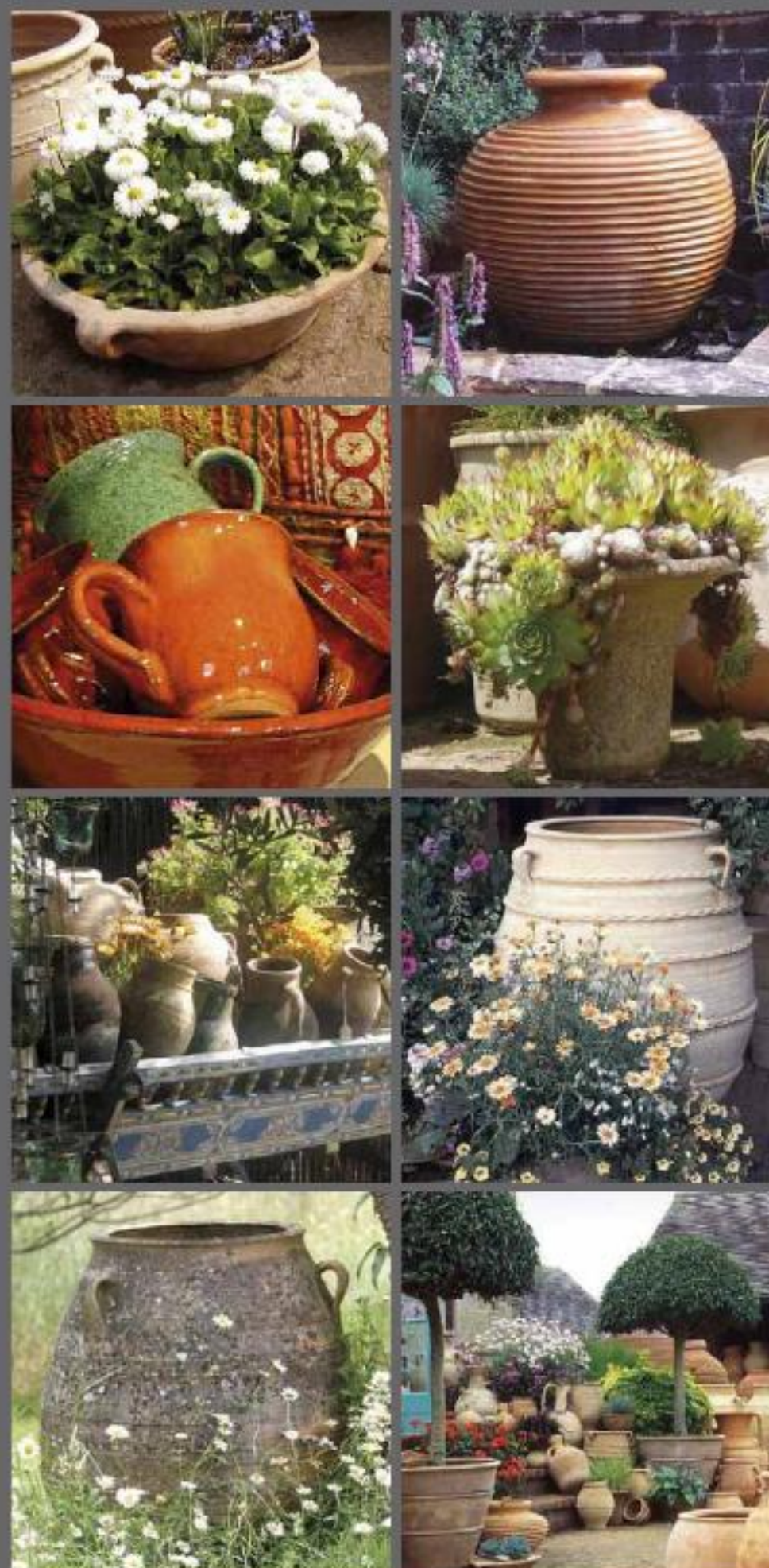
The author of two prize-winning novels, Susan lives in Connecticut but loved the chance to visit a house owned by Enid Blyton. Her most recent book, *The Novel Cure: An A-Z of Literary Remedies*, is coming out this September. Her visit to Manor Farm is on page 92.

"It was trying to write an Enid Blyton-style Famous Five rip-off at the age of ten which got me started as a novelist."



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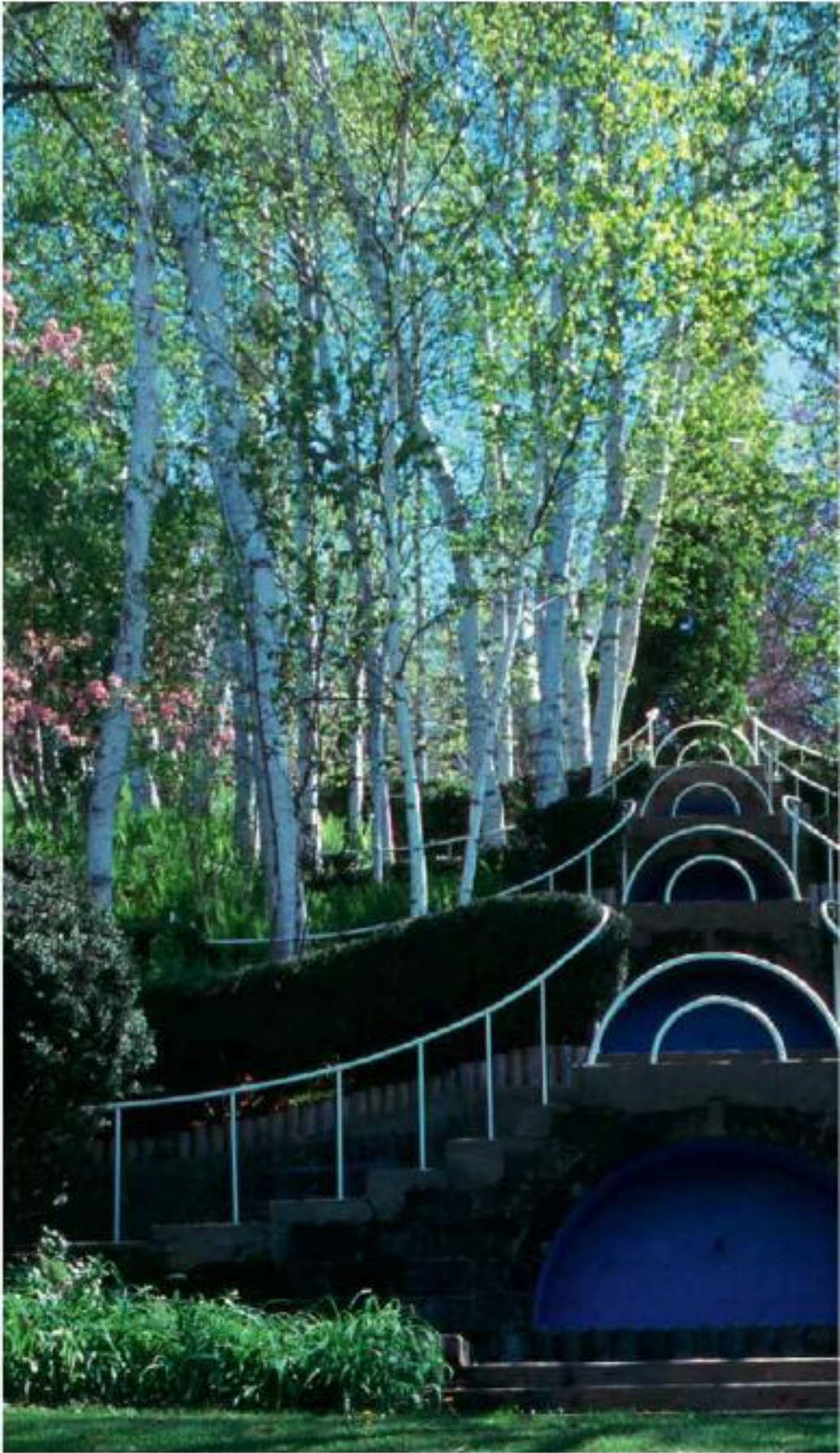
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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

1 Rose Cottage Side Door, Scorsset, Nantucket - Photo by: Michael Galvin 2 The Blue Steps at Naumkeag, Stockbridge, MA 3 Brewster Gardens, Plymouth, Credit: Sylvester Ryan 4 Bridge of Flowers, Shelburne Falls, Credit: Tim Grafft/MOTT





EXHIBITING
AT RHS CHELSEA
FLOWER SHOW,
21ST–25TH
MAY 2013

Massachusetts

Natural Beauty in Abundance

This year, Massachusetts, is the inspiration for a garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show from 21st – 25th May 2013. The 100th anniversary event will include The Massachusetts Garden, designed by Susannah Hunter with Catherine MacDonald.



One of the gifts of Massachusetts' English heritage is a rich tradition of gardening and horticulture, set against stunning landscapes of rolling hills and sparkling coastlines. From the Emerald Necklace collection of vibrant parks running through Boston, to historical estates with gardens inspired by literary successes, Massachusetts will enliven everyone interested in gardens and fascinated in the beauty of Mother Nature.

Massachusetts, in the heart of New England is the perfect holiday destination to explore, combining history, natural beauty and gardening inspiration with the excitement of Boston, the beach resorts of Cape Cod and the bucolic Berkshire countryside. Some of the garden highlights include the Heritage Museums & Gardens in Sandwich on Cape Cod, where world-class Dexter rhododendrons, daylilies, hostas, hydrangeas and other floral varieties enliven the site's 100 acres. Heading west, to Lenox in The Berkshires, novelist Edith Wharton created magnificent formal gardens at her mansion, The Mount, which are open to visitors.

The Lyman Estate in the Greater Boston area evokes the grandeur of an eighteenth century country estate, complete with historic greenhouses and landscaped

gardens. And the Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Central Massachusetts is a living museum of plants featuring a hilltop garden paradise with panoramic views. Combining gardening, history and culinary interests, the larger complexes of Historic Deerfield, Hancock Shaker Village and Old Sturbridge Village, heirloom and cook's gardens resurrect past strains of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and medicinal plants that early American households cultivated.

The Massachusetts Garden by Susannah Hunter at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show has been created by gold winning garden designer Catherine MacDonald of Landform Consultants, and London handbag designer Susannah Hunter, to create a real and leather appliqué garden in order to give a multi-dimensional effect.

Luxury leather handbag designer, Susannah Hunter has drawn inspiration from the works of nineteenth century Massachusetts poet Emily Dickinson. Visitors will marvel at the creativity of a garden unlike any other as her team at Bloomsbury studio has produced huge leather panels sewn with beautifully intricate appliquéd magnolias, foxgloves and irises which will sit alongside atmospheric planting, including columbines, peonies, poppies and flowering dogwood trees.

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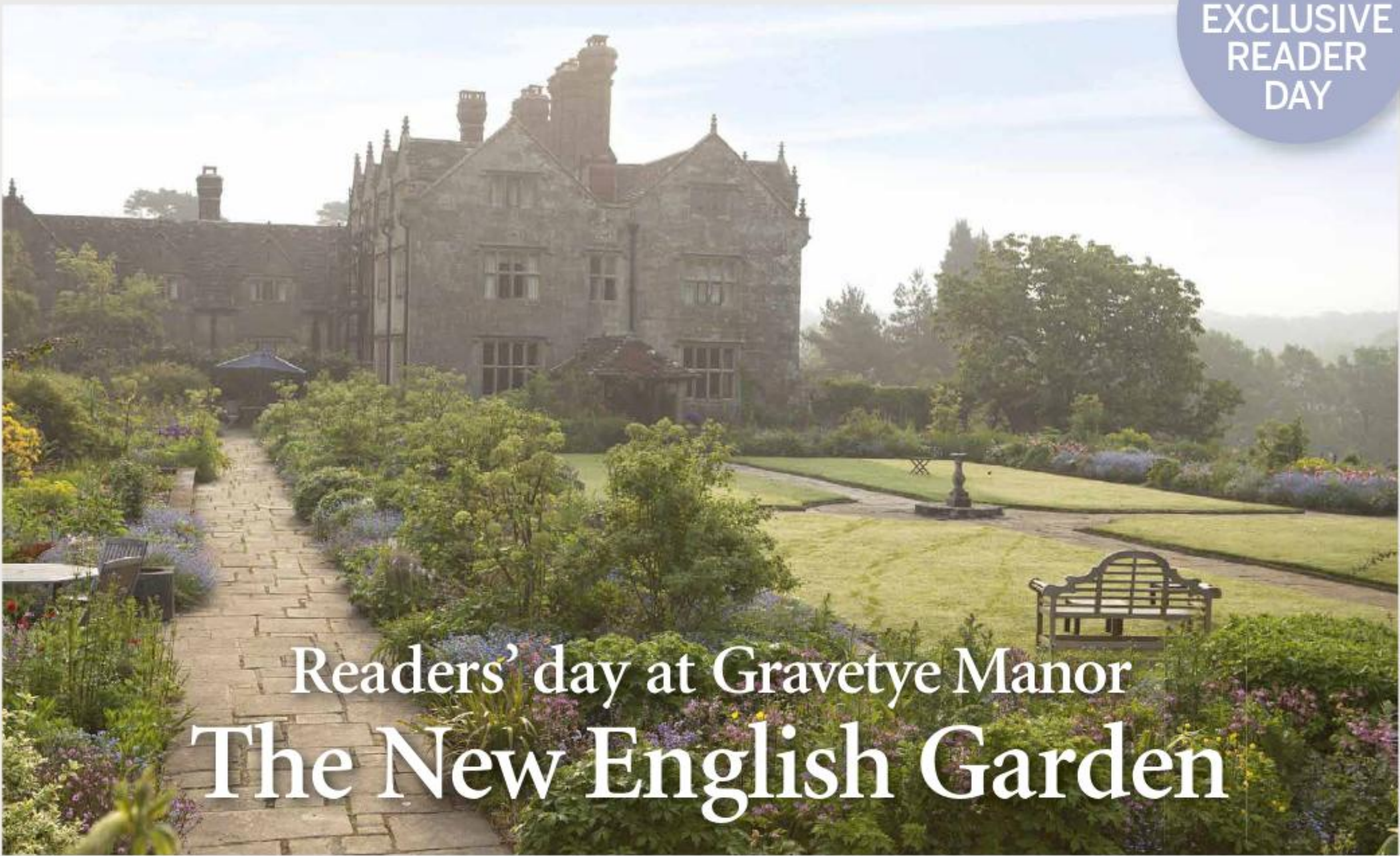
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Readers' day at Gravetye Manor The New English Garden

Visit the home of pioneering Victorian gardener William Robinson and learn how his naturalistic style of planting changed the way we garden

In terms of England's gardening heritage, Gravetye Manor is key. We consider the garden's influence in our feature on page 62, and now we're offering readers the opportunity to discover for themselves more of the garden's history and its glorious restoration that places it as one of the up-and-coming 'new English gardens'. Tucked deep in the Sussex countryside, Gravetye's most notable past owner was William Robinson, an established garden writer, who's ideas for a more naturalistic approach to gardening – although quite controversial at the time – were put into practice at Gravetye.

Your day begins with head gardener Tom Coward and writer Tim Richardson talking about William Robinson and his gardening legacy. You'll then enjoy a champagne reception and delicious three-course lunch from the hotel's award-winning kitchen, followed by a guided tour of the gardens in the afternoon to consider how Robinson's ideas worked in practice and see how Tom is developing the gardens for the 21st century. The day finishes on the terrace for a cup of tea and slice of cake.

THE SPEAKERS



TIM RICHARDSON is a writer and garden critic. His new book *The New English Garden* looks at those gardens made – or remade – in the last decade that define England's current garden style.



TOM COWARD worked at Great Dixter before becoming Gravetye's head gardener. His focus is to conserve Robinson's work while progressing the garden in a continued spirit of experimentation.

RACHEL WARNE

Tickets cost £125

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Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Places are limited so booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries.

* Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost no more than 5p per minute. Calls from mobiles and other providers may vary. For more details about Gravetye go to www.gravetyemanor.co.uk

DATE

Saturday 21 September, 2013

HELD AT

Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane,
West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ

PROGRAMME

9.45am Arrival and coffee

10am Talk by Tim Richardson
on the New English Garden

11.30am Head gardener Tom
Coward talks about Gravetye
past, present and future

12.45pm Champagne
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followed by lunch

2.30pm Garden tours

4pm Tea on the terrace



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Dig in

News, Gardening talent, Nurseryman's favourites & Gardener's notes

NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON

FROM ARTS COMMENTATOR CORINNE JULIUS

Hortus Romanus

The Romans were devoted to gardens and bringing the outside in – as the latest exhibition, *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum* at the British Museum shows. Over a fifth of the site evacuated at Pompeii was devoted to gardens, vineyards and cultivation, and over a third of the homes were centred around a garden, with apartment dwellers keeping pots on terraces and balconies.

The hortus soon became both a status symbol and a refuge at the centre of the home, symbolising the owners agrarian roots as well as their ability to tame the countryside. Ornamental gardens were surrounded with walls decorated with frescoes of birds and flowers, and with the arrival of piped water under Augustus, fountains and basins became a vital part of a conspicuous display of wealth, with the added benefit of cooling the garden.

Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum, British Museum, London. Until 29 September. Tel 020 7323 8181. www.britishmuseum.org

DETAIL OF GARDEN ROOM, FRESCO FROM THE VILLA ARIANNA, BOSCOREALE. © SOPRINTENDENZA SPECIALE PER I BENI ARCHEOLOGICI DI NAPOLI E POMPEI





Leucanthemum 'Real Neat'



Gaillardia 'Fanfare Blaze'



Nepeta grandiflora 'Summer Magic'

NEW PLANTS

Chelsea arrivals

Among the new plants launched at Chelsea this year is a selection from award-winning nursery Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, known for its fine plant selections. These include: *Nepeta grandiflora* 'Summer Magic' with free flowering, bee friendly blooms throughout summer in a compact form; *Gaillardia* 'Fanfare Blaze' has pinwheels of warm orange tubular blooms growing to form a compact mound of colour; and *Leucanthemum* 'Real Neat', ideal as a cutting flower growing on strong stems with feathery white petals and a strong yellow centre. www.hardys-plants.co.uk



A NICE POT OF TEA

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£29.95. Available from garden centres or www.burgonandball.com

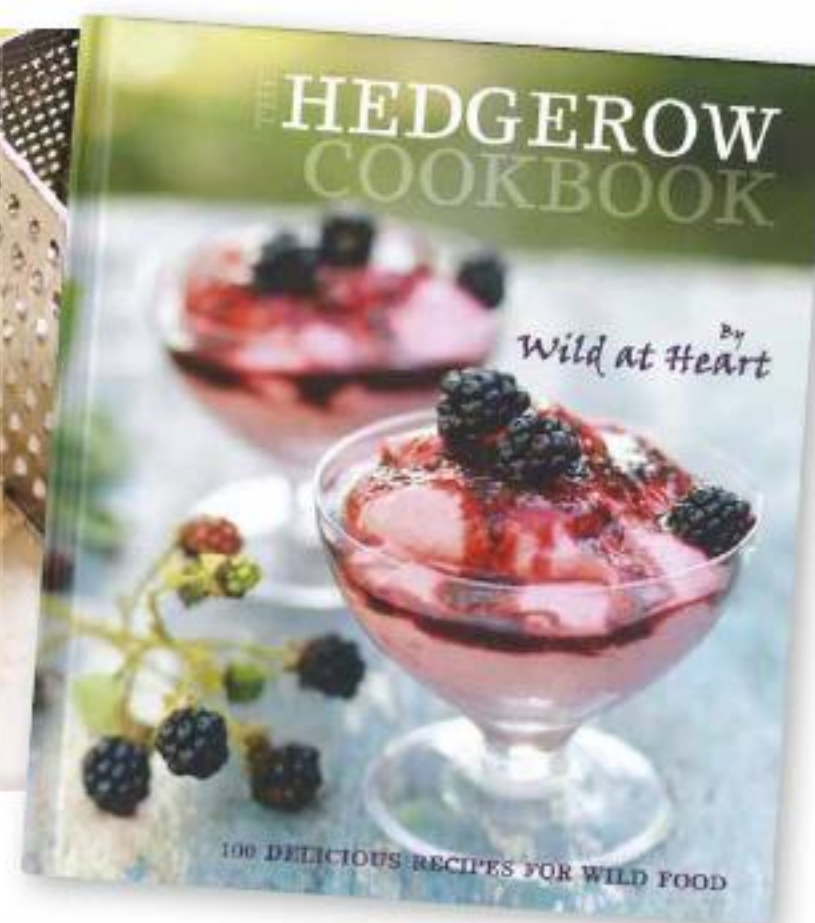
CRAFTS

From sowing to sewing

With home crafting all the rage, why not try your hand at this bright and contemporary needle point floral motif tapestry from Emily Peacock? This piece is 45cm x 45cm and costs £65. This and other kits available at www.emilypeacock.com.



Wild garlic pesto



BOOK

Hedgerow happiness

Take to foraging this year with the new *Hedgerow Cookbook* to hand from wild foods experts Wild at Heart. The book leads you through the seasons with recipes for key ingredients such as nettles, elderberries, quince and chestnuts, each beautifully photographed and offering ideas that are just that little bit more refined than your typical foraged fare. There's practical advice too on gathering your own ingredients and preserving. Published by Pavilion Books, £16.99.



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James Alexander-Sinclair

Garden Designer, Writer & Broadcaster



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WORKSHOPS

Pick and mix learning

Pick up new skills at Easton Walled Gardens' Spring Workshops Week this May. Based at the gardens in Lincolnshire, you can choose from a series of horticultural and creative courses with at least two activities running per day, allowing you to mix what you learn, and perhaps attend over multiple days. Garden courses include Plant Propagation and Wildflower Identification; creative workshops range from Willow Weaving to Hedgerow Medicine. 12-17 May. Tel 01476 530063, www.eastonwalledgardens.co.uk

STEPPING OUT

These smart new Balmoral Lady Leather wellington boots have a hard-wearing rubber outer but the legs are lined in leather, making them comfortable for both hot and cold weather. There's a full-length gusset for easy getting on and off. £199, www.hunter-boot.com



NEW SHOP AND WEBSITE

Food and gardening cheer

Supermarket retailer Waitrose has got the gardening bug. The new Waitrose Flower Garden floristry and gardening range is available in all main Waitroses, plus in 41 of their stores there's now an outdoor nursery-style area selling plants and accessories. You can also go online to a new website set up in association with Crocus for a more extensive range of products and plants plus advice from expert Alan Titchmarsh. Go to waitrosegarden.com

Diary

• Kelmarsh Hardy Plant Fair

Specialist nurseries selling a range of unusual plants plus daily talk (Ursula Buchan on the Monday) and entry to award-winning garden. 5-6 May. 10am-5pm, £4.50.

Kelmarsh Hall, Northampton NN6 9LY. Tel 01604 686543, www.kelmarsh.com

• Malvern Spring Gardening Show

RHS floral marquee, specialist plant nurseries, garden sundries, demonstrations and talks in the Allotment Theatre. 9-12 May, tickets from £15.50. Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW.

Tel 01684 584900, www.threecounties.co.uk

• Knoll Gardens

New walk and talk series looking at the garden through the season and the tasks to be done. 16 May, 20 June, 18 July, 15 August, 5 September, 10 October. 2-3pm, £10 each event. Book in advance. Knoll Gardens, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, www.knollgardens.co.uk

• Rodmarton Manor exclusive open day

Arts & Craft house with eight acre garden including rockery, kitchen garden, herbaceous borders. 21 May, 10.30am-3.30pm, £65 includes house and garden tour with lunch. Rodmarton Manor, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6PF. Booking essential. In aid of horticultural charity Perennial. Tel 0845 676 0640, www.perennial.org.uk

• The Rose Festival and Garden Fair at Cadhay

Specialist nurserymen and garden supplies, rose festival in the walled garden with speakers and demonstrations. Plus arts and rustic crafts, wildlife and conservation organisations. 27 May, 10am-5pm, £7.50. Cadhay, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1QT. www.hospiscaregardenfair.co.uk

• Bloom

30 May – 3 June. Ireland's premier garden show with floral pavilion, show gardens, expert advice and dedicated local food and craft areas. 30 May – 3 June. 15 euros in advance, 20 euros on the day (concs available). Tel +353 1 4569569, www.bloominthepark.com



Holker Garden Festival

• Holker Garden Festival

The festival's 21st anniversary features show gardens, specialist nurseries, horticultural marquee, demonstrations and artisan produce. 31 May – 2 June, 10am-5.30pm. £15 (advance tickets available online). Holker Hall, Cark-in-Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7PL. Tel 01539 558838, www.holkerfestival.co.uk



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Lewis Boshier

Lewis started out in agriculture, but found himself drawn to horticulture and now works as one of the trainee gardeners in East Sussex at Great Dixter

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love *Solanum pyracanthum*. I travelled back with this smallest of plants from the Chelsea Flower Show, getting all sorts of strange looks as I tried to get this single orange-spiked leaf of a plant home. It's now a much loved monster.

Who are your horticultural heroes and why? Elizabeth Strangman for helping and tutoring me. John Massey for being one of the kindest plantsmen I have met to this day. Beth Chatto for taking the time to be so giving with knowledge. Christopher Lloyd, I still find great amusement and help in his books. Fergus Garrett for bringing me into the vast world of horticulture. And Linda Smith to whom I am so grateful for giving the funding that was needed to continue my stay at Great Dixter.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Find, buy or make yourself a tickling fork, one of the very few tools I couldn't garden without. Working off boards means when we are pressed for time we can keep going for a bit longer in bad weather. A notebook – it sounds so simple but it's the best thing to have at all times, to keep track of things.

With whom would you most like to have tea and cake?

Derry Watkins. She had so much enthusiasm when I attended a talk she gave on tender perennials that I find it hard to imagine her stationary even for a moment. So the tea and cake might become a walk across the garden and a conversation about planting.

Favourite planting style Succession: having one plant follow another, and should bedding pockets come to light you can rush to the border with plants you have in hand, ready to continue the cycle.

What is the hardest garden-related thing you've ever done?

I got sick of this horrid wild hedge that surrounds my family's home, so I took it upon myself to dig it out. I found myself a week later with half a hedge missing, thinking 'why did I take on such a task?'

Most embarrassing moment regarding a plant? I'm awful for taking on a huge task and saying "We'll get it done in 15 minutes". The closest I've ever got is 25 minutes. I once encouraged one of our students to join me in digging a gaping hole in a stock bed in the rain... sorry Rachel.

• **Contact email address:** epicdear@live.co.uk



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CHELSEA FRINGE 18 MAY – 9 JUNE

While the Chelsea Flower Show is busy celebrating a magnificent 100 years, its more alternative younger cousin, the Chelsea Fringe, is gearing up for its second year

From community and guerilla gardening projects, to art installations and pop-up restaurants in inspiring venues, just about anything goes for the Chelsea Fringe, as long as it asks us to reconsider our ideas on what gardens and landscapes, flowers and plants can be about.

There are over 100 events taking place in and around London – plus at a selection of regional locations. Highlights include:

- **Edible High Road** After the success of last year's Edible High Road in Chiswick, the idea moves to Salusbury Road, Queen's Park. Fruit trees in tubs will line the street for six weeks to create a river of blossom. At the end of the festival, the trees will be planted out in local schools and community gardens.
- **Edible Bus Stop** Join the grand opening on 18 May of London's newest Edible Bus Stop outside Lambeth Hospital on Landor Road. The local community has created a productive and social garden space alongside the stop for the 322 bus, with the ultimate aim of having edible bus stops along the whole route.
- **Urban Orchard with a Twist** The gritty urban landscape of disused Battersea Power Station will be the location for The Pop-Up Foundation's 'Planting Ideas', where an orchard of people will be encouraged to 'grow' new ideas for a sustainable world. Individual 'trees' (people with their feet planted in soil)

will be asked their thoughts on how we move to an ecological age. 18 May.

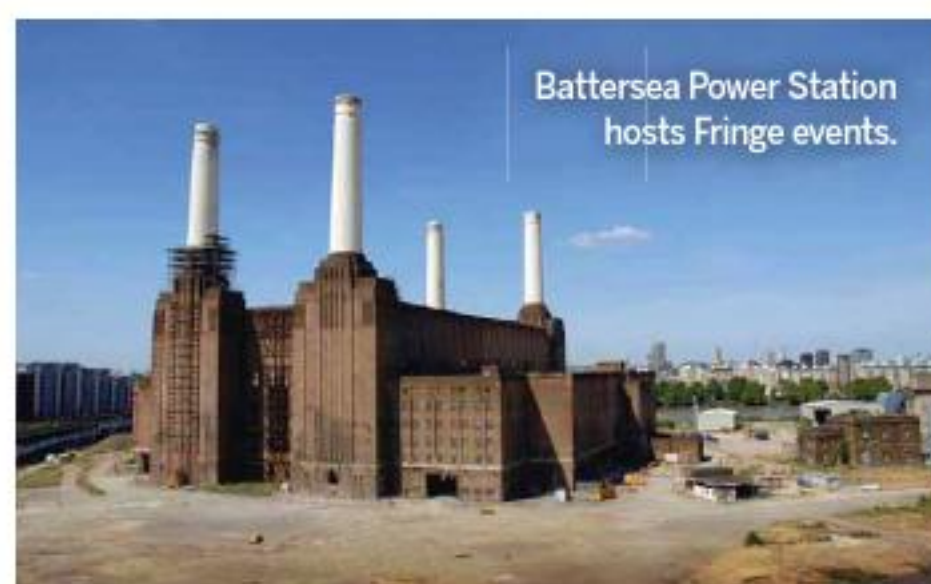
- **Open Squares** Among the private garden squares open as part of the Fringe is the British Medical Association Council Garden in central London (8 June). Tours reveal more about the history of this Lutyens-designed garden and its plants.

- **Flowers exhibition** Two photographic artists present work on a floral theme: Hiroyuki Arakawa from Japan shows his series of intimate studies of white flowers. Lisa Greagh has images from her 'Instant Garden' series inspired by Dutch flower paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Little Black Gallery SW10, until 1 June including pop-up floral shop 21-25 May.

- **Covent Garden art installation** Inspired by the Crabtree & Evelyn's Gardeners Handcare range, artist Emma Coleman showcases innovative planting combinations aimed at prompting public interaction and exploration. Look out for live events and workshops.

- **Full frontal planting** Gibraltar Terrace, Chatham, Kent, is the location for an ambitious community project to green up the frontage along the traffic-laden A2. Pots and window boxes will be planted for year-round interest, with seasonal highlights added. Join in on 19 May.

For full details of all events and to check dates and times go to www.chelseafringe.com





Ferula communis

A spectacular, tall and robust herbaceous perennial with mounds of green, finely divided, feathery ostrich plume-like leaves. In time plants summon up enough energy to throw up colossal stout branching stems several metres high, purple tinted, dusted grey-green, and studded with bright greenish yellow flowers. These come in dramatic large rounded umbels composed of 20-40 rays and often festooned with insects. Summer dormancy follows seed set as the plant retreats underground into a hefty root taking several years before flowering again. Numerous forms exist with variations in leaf colour, size of inflorescence and season. When several plants flower together you are transported into a fantasy world.

Height/spread 4m x 1.5m.

Origins Throughout the Mediterranean to the Middle East.

Conditions Full sun in most soils except waterlogged.

Hardiness rating RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b¹.

Season February-July.

May plants

With summer finally on its way, which plants should you be choosing to give your garden a chance of really showing its true colours?

WORDS FERGUS GARRETT PHOTOGRAPHS SHARON PEARSON



Fergus Garrett is a plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex. He also lectures, writes and serves on Royal Horticultural Society committees

Papaver commutatum 'Ladybird'

A dazzling poppy that is easy to grow. Decorated throughout with fine hairs, it has blue-green dissected leaves and sinewy stems, crooked at the neck, dangling fat buds that straighten upright before splitting open, unfurling thin, silky, cupped flowers of rich pillar-box red. Each petal is highlighted at its base with a distinct broad black blotch. Direct sow outside in spring or into pots in October, prick out when young, overwinter under glass and plant out the following year. Daring/exhilarating with *Lychnis coronaria*.

Height/spread 50cm x 30cm. AGM*.

Origins Turkey, Iran and the Caucasus.

Conditions Full sun in any soil that isn't waterlogged.

Hardiness rating RHS H4.

Season May-June.



Aquilegia chrysantha 'Yellow Queen'

Attractive grey green, broadly divided leaves and long graceful stems supporting forward facing pale lemon flowers. The species in its native South-western United States is pollinated by long tongued hawk moths, able to reach into the backswept spurs containing the nectar. 'Yellow Queen' flowers for longer than most columbines. Lovely with mauve *Allium hollandicum* and *Hesperis matronalis*. Reliably perennial but tires with age.

Height/spread 90cm x 45cm.

Origins Native to the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts of southern USA, favouring cooler wetter pockets.

Conditions In most soil (except waterlogged) in full sun or part shade.

Hardiness rating USDA 3a-9b.

Season May-July.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society
†Hardiness ratings given where available



Euphorbia palustris

Fresh green stems carrying arching, dark green, long linear leaves flashed with distinct white midribs, leading to a bun of acid lime green erupting from the centre. The stems elongate as the central floret flattens out. Flowering side branches enhance the impression of electric acid green, bleeding down the uppermost canopy. In mid-summer the plant takes on a green willowy habit only to switch on again for the autumn with crimson, yellow and orange.

Height/spread 1.2m x 1.2m. AGM.

Origins Native to Europe from Sweden down to Spain and east to the Caucasus.

Conditions Wet moist soil, will thrive in swampy conditions in sun or part shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season May-June for flowering and then October-November for autumn colour.

Dryopteris wallichiana

Hairy tarantulan knuckles, from which rise black-scaled, reptilian croziers that expand and unfurl, straightening into tri-pinnate, long and lanceolate leaves. These are widest in the middle, with regularly spaced lustrous pinnules, and are held upright making a shuttlecock shape. The foliage is yellow green when young, turning darker with age, contrasting with the black shaggy scaled stalks and midribs. Asian plants give darker scales than the central American.

Height/spread 90cm x 75cm. AGM.

Origins Strangely scattered – Mexico to Argentina, Hawaii, Madagascar, Turkey, East across the Himalayas, Phillipines.

Conditions Semi to full shade in moist, humus-rich soil. Will tolerate dry shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

Season May-November.



Lunaria annua

A vibrant, rich purple form of biennial honesty much preferred over the paler, murkier norm. It bears cruciferous flowers in terminal racemes off branching plants with coarse, distinctly serrated heart-shaped leaves. The intense purple looks amazing with red tulips, orange wallflowers, acid green *Smyrniium perfoliatum*, and magenta *Gladiolus communis* subsp. *byzantinus*. Seed heads follow. These bleach and become translucent, turning into highly decorative pale discs punctuated by individual brown seeds held within. Seeds around freely, but keep separate to avoid cross-pollination.

Height/spread 90cm x 30cm.

Origins Southern Europe.

Conditions Most soils in sun or semi-shade.

Hardiness rating USDA 4a-8b.

Season May-February.

Places to visit

Fergus shares some of his favourite places to see plants at their best.

Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, is one of Britain's finest gardens. The garden is comprised of a series of garden rooms around an Elizabethan manor house surrounded by beautiful countryside. May is an inspirational time, especially in the nut walk as soft light suffuses through the freshly emerging foliage of the understory. Biddenden Road,



Cally Gardens, Scotland

Nr Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AB.
Tel 01580 710700, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle

Cally Gardens belongs to Michael Wickenden, one of our most exciting plantsmen. He is the owner and manager of this working nursery specialising in unusual perennials with exciting borders and stockbeds containing over 4,000 perennials. With many

Valeriana pyrenaica

A delightful, clump-forming perennial with pointed, heart-shaped, light-green leaves, sharply serrated, puckered and coarsely textured. These are loosely clasped around and oppositely arranged in tiers on upright stems. The densely branched, domed clusters of pale pink to off-white flowers are scented and carried throughout the plant. With age flowers give way to wispy, fluffy seed heads that float elegantly above the main body. Looks heavenly when mixed in with common cow parsley, creating a light and airy tapestry of pink and white.

Height/spread 1.2m x 40cm.

Origins Found alongside streams and waterways in the Pyrenees and the Iberian system. Naturalised in the British Isles.

Conditions Moist soil in sun or part shade.

Season May-July.



Gladiolus communis
subsp. *byzantinus*

Unashamedly high-octane magenta flowers, distinctly gladioli in shape, with centres streaked in subtle flashes of white and gold, decorate upright stems enfolded by thin sword-like pleated leaves. A cormous perennial that struggles to increase in the colder parts of the UK, but give it heat and it's prolific – hence the freely naturalised colonies in Devon and Cornwall. *Gladiolus italicus* is markedly inferior but often sold as *byzantinus* to unsuspecting customers. Electrifying next to lime-green euphorbias.

Height/spread 70cm x 20cm. AGM.

Origins Native of Spain, NW Africa, Sicily.

Conditions Sunny position in a sheltered site. Any soil free of waterlogging.

Hardiness rating RHS H3-H4, USDA 5a-10b.

Season May-July.



Tulipa sprengeri

I'm emotionally attached to this little species tulip as it originates from the Pontic Alps in Amasya, northeastern Turkey, where my grandmother spent her childhood years. It is the latest of all the tulips to flower, with small blazing scarlet star-shaped flowers flushed with shades of olive green and mustard on the outer petals. It takes 5-7 years from seed to flower. Bulbs are small and consistently pull themselves deeper into the soil. Last recorded in 1896 and now believed to be extinct in the wild, it self-seeds in gardens.

Height/spread 50cm x 10cm. AGM.

Origins Probably open woodland or mountain scrub in northeastern Turkey.

Conditions Any moist yet well-drained soil in sun or part shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.

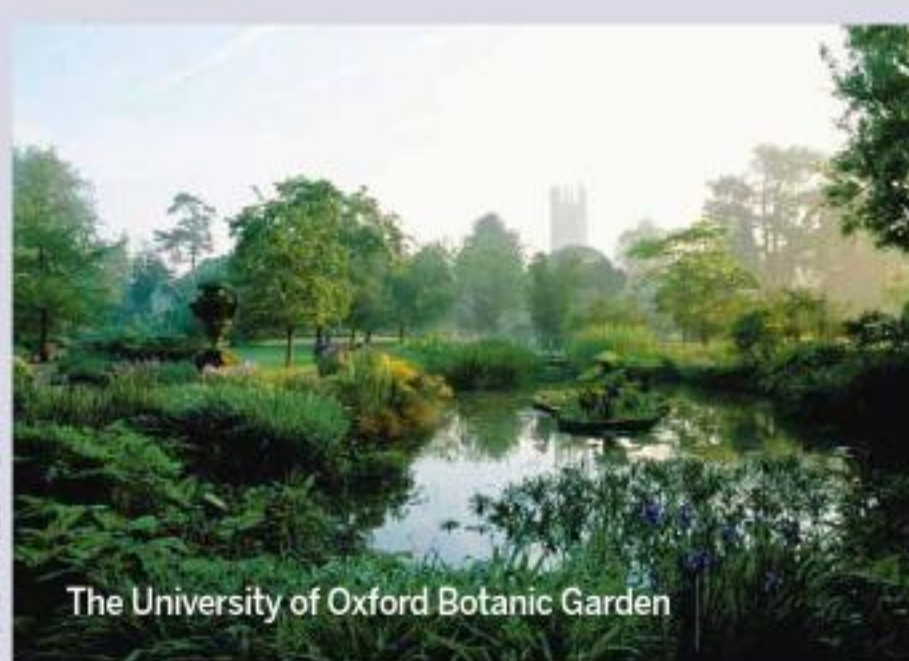
Season May-June.

expeditions to exotic locations under his belt, including the Rwenzori Mountains of Uganda, Mishmi Hills Arunachal Pradesh in NE India, and the mountains of central and southern Ecuador, Michael has a mouthwatering list. Gatehouse of Fleet, Castle Douglas, Scotland DG7 2DJ. Tel 01557 815029, www.callygardens.co.uk

The incredible variation in geography and climate in

Turkey has resulted in a land particularly rich in wild flowers. Over 11,466 species are found in the country of which 3,649 are endemic. Roadsides, walls, fields, streams, hills, and mountains are littered with interesting things. A visit here will change your gardening life. Beware of the sheep dogs.

The University of Oxford Botanic Garden is the oldest botanic garden in Britain. Plenty here for the visitor to



The University of Oxford Botanic Garden

see inside and out with approximately 5,000 different plant species. Of particular interest is the National Collection of Euphorbias. The collection is predominantly found within the Family Beds. There are species suitable for almost any soil type and condition. The University of Oxford Botanic Garden, Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ. Tel 01865 286690, www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk

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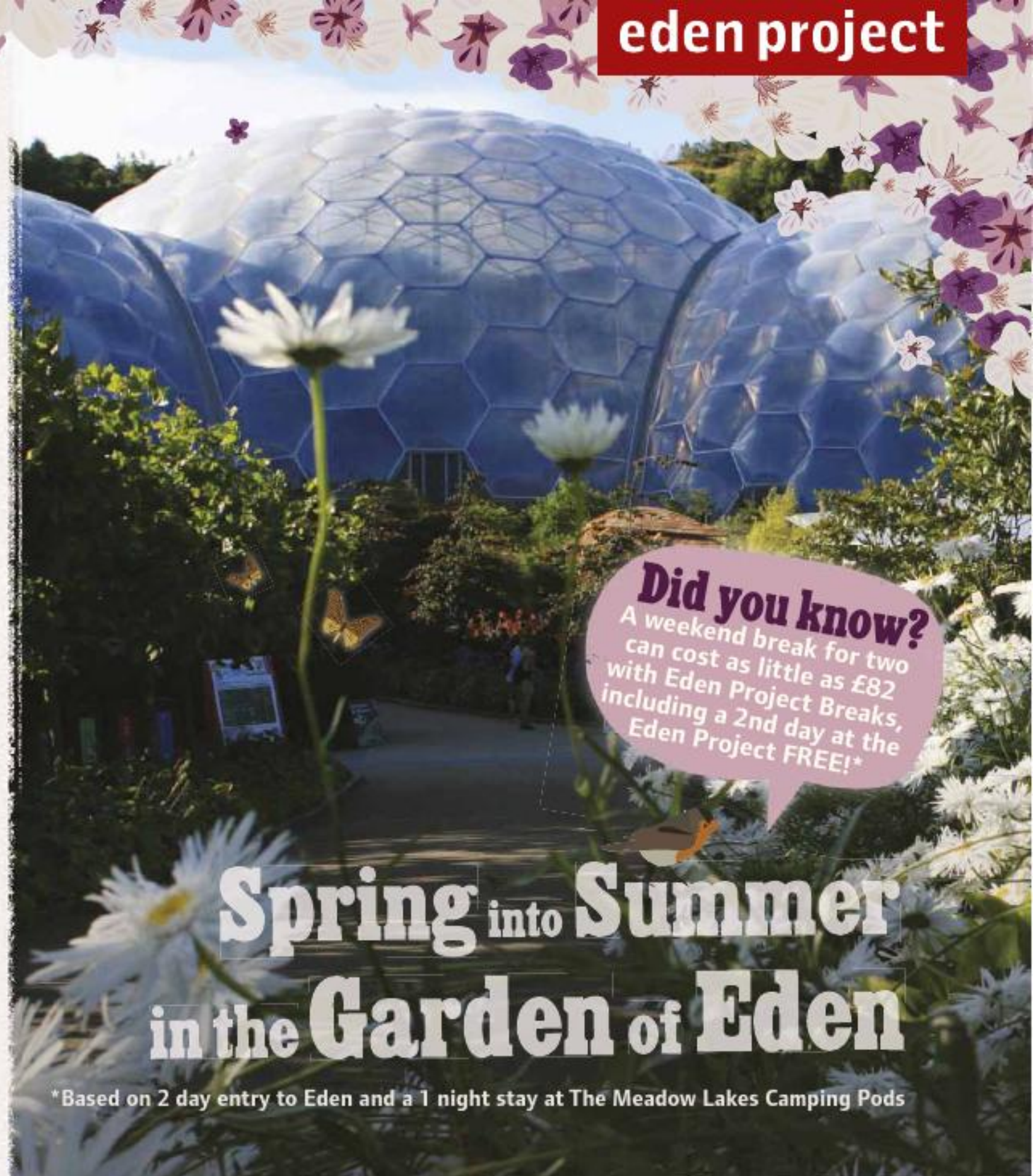
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Expressions

Looking forward

As temperatures begin their slow climb and the risk of frosts recedes, we can start to think about some serious planting

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ ILLUSTRATION PETRA BÖRNER

Pot on geraniums

I took cuttings of my pelargoniums last summer, and have nursed them through winter with the aid of a greenhouse and a heated cable. They've taken a few nibbles from some mystery greenhouse dweller, but survived. Seven cuttings went into each big pot, which suited them perfectly at the time, but now they are really jostling. Time to give each its own pot. In mild areas they can go outdoors, but there is still a chance of frost in colder areas so either hang on until June, or be ever ready to put them under glass or fleece.

Thin out bamboo, Japanese style

There are two reasons to prune bamboo now: one is to harvest the new shoots, as they are edible and delicious. Some are tastier than others, and all will need steaming before eating, but pick them when the shoots are about a foot long and eat the tender insides of the shoot tip. The other reason is for shape. Bamboo looks daft lopped so instead I take out several of the oldest shoots each year, right down to the base, and remove some of the lower side branches on those remaining. The result is an airier, more graceful look.

Start a comfrey tube

Soon everything will need feeding, lots. I like my garden to make its own fertiliser, and all it takes are the right plants and some vaguely Heath-Robinsonesque engineering. The plant of course is comfrey, deep-rooted and able to haul hidden nutrients up from the subsoil and into its leaves, to be tapped by grateful gardeners. To turn it into something useable I have secured a piece of downpipe to my fence and taped the top of a plastic bottle (with the lid screwed on) to its base, so it makes a long, extended funnel. Comfrey is stuffed into the downpipe and a bottle of water on a piece of string is dropped on top, to push the leaves down. Slowly they rot and produce a concentrated liquid feed, which I access by unscrewing the bottle top. It's also time to plant comfrey, if you have none. Choose non-invasive *Symphytum x uplandicum* 'Bocking 14'.

Things to do

Plant summer bedding pots, but protect from late frosts in cooler areas.

Start the hunt for lily beetles: they are bright red and their grubs will strip your lilies of foliage.

Earth up potatoes and water them during dry spells.

Regular hoeing of weeds now will help prevent them getting out of hand later in the summer.

Plant gladiolus corms in blocks at the allotment or in drifts through borders.



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GARDEN Trailfinders Australian Garden

DESIGNER Phillip Johnson

CONTRACTOR Phillip Johnson Landscapes

SUPPLYING 200 tonnes of gabbro boulders, 60 tonnes of Scottish beach cobbles and pebbles, 20-30 tonnes of Scottish sandstone walling, 40m² of cedagravel, and 20m² of reclaimed Yorkstone flags.

Australian favourites, Fleming's Nurseries return to RHS Chelsea Flower Show with a bang and joining forces with the talented Melbourne landscape designer Phillip Johnson.

The garden will be entirely reliant for energy on solar panels, while water will be taken and filtered from surrounding sites. All plants and stone being used have been sourced locally, or are reclaimed, as much as possible.



GARDEN Telegraph Garden

DESIGNER Christopher Bradley-Hole

CONTRACTOR Crocus

SUPPLYING Black basalt paving and bespoke pieces, with bush hammered surfaces, to create a water and landscape feature. The design is intricate and lots of detail is required in the cutting of the stone.



GARDEN Brewin Dolphin Garden

DESIGNER Robert Myers

CONTRACTOR Willerby Landscapes

SUPPLYING Over 50m² of sawn buff Yorkstone paving. The design is inspired by sponsor Brewin Dolphin's company ethos; bespoke and innovative, but firmly rooted in past traditions.

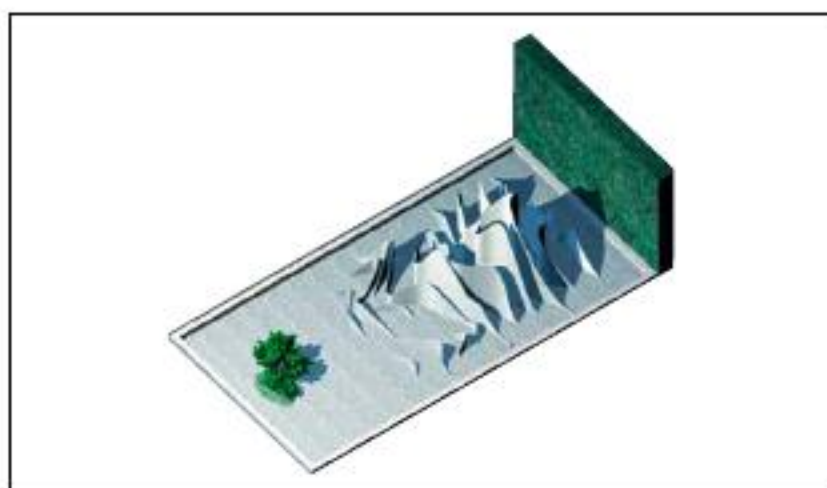


GARDEN Cloudy Bay Discovery Garden

DESIGNERS Andrew Wilson, Gavin McWilliam

CONTRACTOR Garden Link

SUPPLYING Gabbro boulders, which Andrew, Gavin and Dan Flynn (of Garden Link) personally selected. Also supplying golden amber limestone for the rammed earth walls.



GARDEN Sound of Silence

DESIGNER Fernando Gonzalez

CONTRACTOR Solid Surfaces Northwest Ltd.

SUPPLYING Silver grey granite aggregate to fill the 6m x 3m garden and silver grey granite kerb to edge. Inspired by the austerity of Zen Japanese gardens.



GARDEN BALI Stand

DESIGNER Charlotte Murrell

SUPPLYING BALI affiliate members are kindly providing their products to create the stand. Our contribution is black limestone plank paving with a riven finish, and our thin black slate tier walling system.



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Chelsea 2013 preview

This year the RHS Chelsea Flower Show celebrates its 100th anniversary. Here's our guide to the very best centennial show gardens, plants, designers, trends and shopping

Contents

- 32 Designer profiles
- 44 Planting trends
- 48 Plants to look out for
- 51 What to buy

Chelsea Flower Show 21-25 May

BUYING TICKETS

Advance purchase only. Tickets are extremely limited – go to www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2013 to check availability. RHS members enjoy discounts and priority booking. Call 0845 130 4646 or go to www.rhs.org.uk/join

CHELSEA TV COVERAGE

Starts with show previews on 19 and 20 May and continues daily with a lunchtime show on BBC One and evening show on BBC Two. See www.gardensillustrated.com for podcasts recorded at Chelsea.



Designer profiles

Medals at Chelsea are hotly contested.
We profile some of the star designers vying for gold

WORDS ANNIE GATTI

CATO LENSTOCKHOLM

Ulf Nordfjell

Profile

Name Ulf Nordfjell

Born Umeå, Sweden

Training Biology and
Landscape Architect

ARK LAR/MSA

Chelsea History

Two golds and Best in Show for his 2009 garden. This is his third Chelsea garden.

When I was a little boy, Ulla Molin was the queen of gardening in Sweden. She threw away all the bright

colours and introduced greys, lavenders and whites, and more simple plantings. When I visited Nicole de Vésian's garden in Provence, France. I was astonished to see that she used the same structure, the same simple plants in limited colours and created the same relationship to the landscape. I know that they would probably hate my strict forms as they both worked with organic ones, but I think they'd appreciate my materials.

The landscape architect Isamu Noguchi was a strong influence on me. He distilled the landscape and introduced a desert into the South Coast Plaza at Costa Mesa in California. What he achieved, we are still trying to do.

I am obsessed with getting the very best materials for my gardens: stone, timber, glass and steel. In

Sweden we use granite and slate, not limestone as it cracks in our climate. New technology with glass makes it much easier to use now.

It's very important to think about time when making a garden, to realise that what we're doing is for the future, not for this afternoon.

Water is essential in a garden. As soon you put water in, you have a meeting point. It brings sound, and glitter. **Chelsea brings particular challenges.** It's very difficult to relate the garden to the landscape there, and to produce light and shade in early May because all the greens are very light. This year I have staggered the hedge and varied its height to create shade.

Chelsea Flower Show *designer profile*

Ulf's essential design elements



1 Water and light

Uplighting the *Amelanchier lamarckii* and *Prunus x gondouinii* 'Schnee' trees on either side intensifies the Moorish spirit of this contemporary water garden attached to an old villa in Stockholm.



2 Screens and boundaries

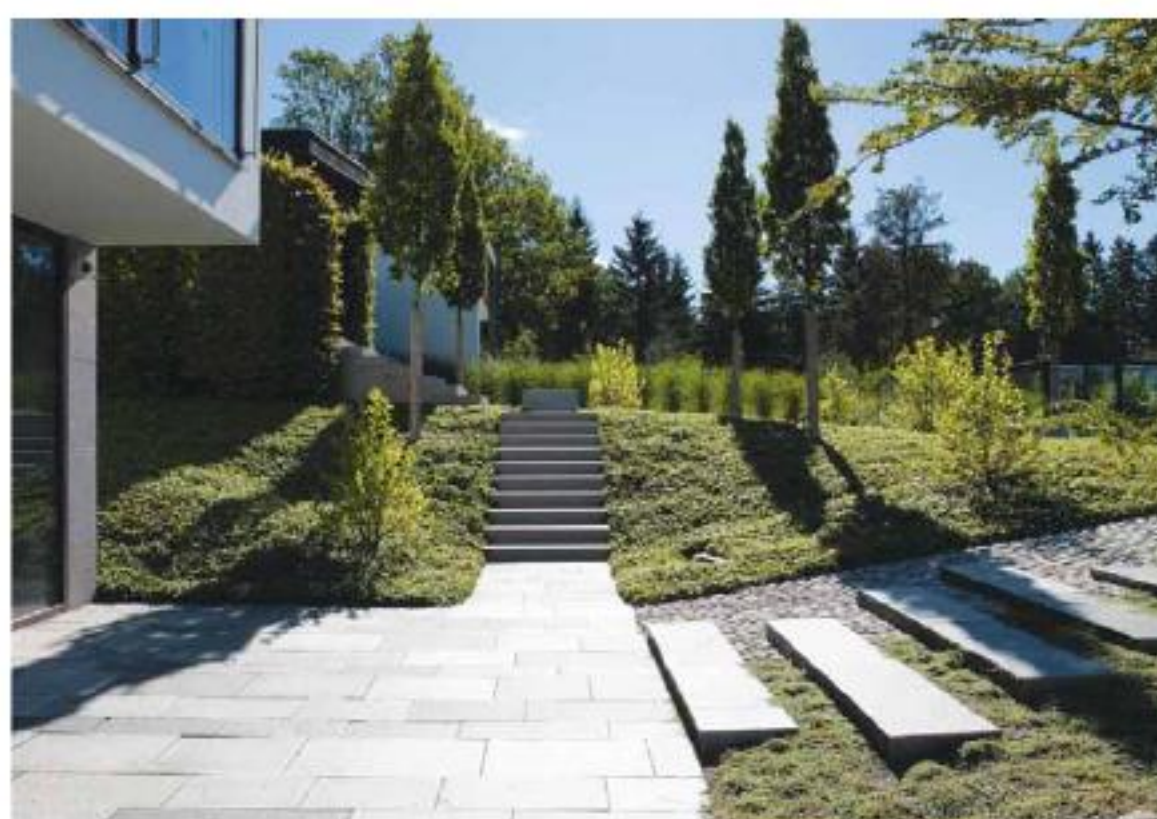
Ulf uses shaped trees such as this pleached hornbeam to create screens and boundaries within his designs. An underplanting of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Great Star (= 'Blanc Bleu') creates a billowing effect at their base.



IMAGES 1 - 4 SHOT BY PER RANJUNG

3 Swedish meadows

Ulf draws on the colours and form of native Swedish meadow planting in many of his designs. Here *Miscanthus* and *Carex*, in steel-edged borders, link with the meadow in the foreground.



4 Echoes and mirrors

The clean lines of the slate 'steps' mirror the architecture of the modern house. Granite cobblestones provide contrasting texture while *Quercus robur* f. *fastigiata* 'Koster' trees echo the surrounding landscape.

2013 Chelsea garden

Plot MA17

Sponsor Laurent-Perrier

Contractor Crocus

Theme Tribute to two modernising garden makers, Ulla Molin and Nicole de Vésian.

An elegant rectilinear design on two levels that uses travertine for the hard surfaces. A central path leads to a raised terrace with a sharp-angled oak pergola framed by a copper wall. This overlooks a pool edged with *Cyperus papyrus*. Staggered walls of espaliered *Quercus robur* f. *fastigiata* 'Koster' create the backdrop while spires of the same tree and clipped yew blocks punctuate the planting. Gleditsia trees create light shade where clipped *Enkianthus perulatus* is paired with *Hakonechloa macra*. **Contact** www.nordfjellcollection.se





NATALIE JOURNAL

Jinny Blom

Profile

Name Jinny Blom

Born Leamington Spa,
England

Training Was a
psychologist before
becoming a garden
designer

Chelsea History
Designed The Healing
Garden in 2002 for
HRH The Prince of
Wales; won a gold for
Laurent-Perrier in 2007.

A Chelsea garden is a story. In my way of thinking, when you design you take inspiration from something and then you create something that is new. For the story of the Sentebale garden, there had to be a dwelling. This is the most important thing for any of us, a point where human beings can meet. Mine is a contemporary evocation of a traditional Lesotho roundhouse.

When I'm designing a non-Chelsea garden I'm trying to get to grips with place and the appropriateness of what I'm trying to achieve. Most of my UK gardens are attached to historic houses, which means looking at history, environment and contemporary usage.

I'm someone who seeks synthesis of knowledge and I think landscaping is the greatest synthesis – it's people, the land, the sky, nature, materials. Everything

I'm interested in is synthesised in one 3D whole.

The plants and the places are what excite me most.

I really like the variety of places I work in because they bring me into contact with the plants that are appropriate for that place. I'm working up in Scotland at the moment and doing the first part of the planting list I got this real surge of happiness, thinking of the high rainfall, acid soil, soft water, beautiful light, thinking 'I can do three quarters of a mile of *Rhododendron luteum* on its own. Wow, that's going to be absolutely amazing.'

The photos of my gardens often make it look like all I'm doing is planting but every garden I make is highly structured. I start with a masterplan, always. The materials I use depend entirely on the garden and the nature of the original house.

Jinny's essential design elements



1 Lasting interest

Soft, billowing planting is underpinned by clipped shapes such as pleached trees and topiarised hedges. These often evergreen elements create interest in winter, when herbaceous planting has died down.



2 Clean lines

When choosing the materials for a garden, Jinny works backwards from the house. Here the clean lines of concrete and glass, which take their cue from the modern extension, are softened by the rich colours of the planting.

1 CHARLIE HOPKINSON, 2 & 3 NICOLA BROWNE, 4 ALLAN POLLOCK-MORRIS



3 Striking species

The impact of a large swathe of a single species chosen for both its flowers and foliage can be dramatic. Jinny employs this to great effect in both large gardens and small, as seen here.



4 Native origins

Jinny draws on the vernacular, both in planting and structure. Here she has augmented the grasses and wildflowers of the Scottish Highlands with lupins, which have naturalised, creating rivers of blue through the meadow planting.

2013 Chelsea garden

Plot MA16

Sponsor B&Q

Contractor Steve Swatton

Theme An isolated and beautiful country hit by poverty and HIV/AIDS. Sentebale means 'forget me not'.

A garden that evokes the varied landscape of Lesotho using plants familiar to UK gardeners, and the story of the charity Sentebale set up by Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso to help Lesotho's deprived children. The circular motif takes its inspiration from the country's buildings, hats and blankets. Laser-cut Tuscan sandstone steps suggest striated mountains and lead through arid planting of pines and sea buckthorn to damp valleys where willows and large-leaved rheum and *Darmera peltata* dominate. Forget-me-nots and nemesias represent its beautiful meadows. **Contact** 020 7253 2100, www.jinnyblom.com





Christopher Bradley-Hole

Profile

Name Christopher Bradley-Hole

Born Brighton, England

Training Dip Arch RIBA

Chelsea History

Five Gold Medals and two Best in Show.

When I start a design, whether for Chelsea or for a private garden, I am looking for the uniqueness of the project. The first visit to a site, before you are caught up in the technical details, is an invaluable opportunity to form a picture in your mind. At this stage I try to be open to all possibilities and let ideas flow.

I think I am minimalist in the way I like things to be simplified rather than elaborate. The Chelsea garden has an underlying story but I hope you will be able to enjoy the garden purely as a composition. When I studied garden history and conservation, the gardens that most interested me were the 18th-century examples that had an underlying narrative. It seems to me that, if there's a philosophy to the garden, it will help to hold the design together.

In considering a garden in north London, which connects to adjacent common land with old oak trees, I studied the surrounding landscape from aerial photographs. This revealed a nearby field pattern that I felt should be integrated in some way within the garden, so I introduced an abstract pattern of hedges to represent a vestige of the original landscape.

I love the physical act of gardening. I have become particularly interested in pruning. I've worked a lot with trees over the last few years and have learnt a great deal from the tree nurseries in Germany and specialists such as Jan-Dieter Bruns. When I visited Japan I was hugely impressed that, even in the smallest garden, people seemed to be able to make room for a tree by pruning it and, in doing so, revealing its special character.

Christopher's essential design elements



1 Neutral space

Spaces for contemplation are an important element in Christopher's designs. Here a sandstone circle, capped with sawn sandstone, creates a neutral space between house and field in a private garden in Sussex.



2 Meeting point

Clipped beech hedging defines the meeting point between the contemporary building and the natural landscape in this private garden. The grass mount serves as a sculpted form and a raised viewing point to the cherry orchard.



3 Shadow play

The clean lines of this Pietra Serena sandstone paving, which is also used for the cantilevered bench, creates opportunities for shadow play from the trees in the courtyard of Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, Sussex.



4 Structured informality

Geometric beds of informally planted grasses and perennials, intersected by paths, create rivers of gold, pink, red, purple and white beneath the mature trees of this Oxfordshire garden.

2013 Chelsea garden

Plot MA18

Sponsor The Daily Telegraph

Contractor Crocus

Theme An English wooded landscape influenced by Japanese garden making

This design draws on the Japanese garden of Ryoan-ji to create an interpretation of the wooded landscape of England. Blocks of native box, yew and beech, suggests the remnants of the primeval woods. The lines cut through them, infilled with a rich mix of perennials and grasses, correspond to field patterns while three pools, set at different heights, suggest a winding river. Three hazels form the woodland canopy. A wooden path between the charred oak boundary wall and a colonnade of oak columns offers glimpses of the flowers and trees beyond. **Contact** 020 8939 1748, www.christopherbradley-hole.co.uk





ROBERT MYERS ASSOCIATES

Robert Myers

Profile

Name Robert Myers
Born London, England
Training Diploma
 LA, CMLI, MSGD
Chelsea History
 Five gold medals, this
 is his eighth garden.

My starting point for any design is the client and the site. I'm trying to create something they'd have created themselves if they'd had the necessary skills and tools.

I sit down at the drawing board and start churning out ideas until something clicks. It can happen very quickly or it can take days. I always start with hand drawings – the computer is too exact for this part of the process, you want to be able to draw things, reject them, scribble on top of them – and I usually do it at night, when there are no distractions.

Chelsea is an opportunity to experiment and try things out. Every time I do a Chelsea garden it feeds back into my other design work.

My own garden is a bit of a testing ground but it's also a family garden full of football goals and slides.

My wife is a landscape architect too and we have several designs for it but they've not been implemented yet. Somehow it's much easier to tell other people what to do with their spaces than decide what to do with your own.

If decking's done well it's a beautiful material. Our Chelsea deck is made of slats of iroko, without grooves.

I've been very inspired by designers like Geoffrey Jellicoe, Burle Marx, Dan Kiley. I get excited by exotic landscapes, be it southern Italy or Sri Lanka. I also like really well-used spaces in cities such as Barcelona and New York. Paley Park in Manhattan is just a little space between two buildings but it has a wonderful grid of gleditsia trees, ivy on the side wall and an amazing waterfall at the back. It's a cool and beautiful space.

Chelsea Flower Show *designer profile*

Robert's essential design elements



1 High spirit

Capturing the spirit of the place is a starting point for Robert's designs. Here, re-use of vernacular materials links the rill and pool to its surroundings.



2 Experimental elements

Robert enjoys the chance to experiment with materials and other elements of design at Chelsea. Here the woven fencing for the Fortnum & Mason garden in 2007 suggests a flattened wicker hamper.



3 Texture contrasts

Contrasts in texture can be created with plants and structures as this 2009 Chelsea design shows. Robert uses clipped evergreens such as box and multi-stems such as *Rhus typhina*.



4 Material unity

Restrained use of materials unifies Robert's designs. Here the pale stone wall coping that retains a sloping oval lawn merges into the path edging, creating an elegant and cohesive line.

2013 Chelsea garden

Plot MA21

Sponsor Brewin Dolphin

Contractor Willerby

Landscapes Ltd

Theme British natives used in a contemporary way.

This design, a number of interlocking L-shapes, is a celebration of predominantly British native species, from the commonplace *Rosa rugosa* and *Achillea millefolium* to the rare and beautiful magenta *Gladiolus illyricus* and green-winged orchid *Anacamptis morio*. Pleached *Acer campestre* frame one side, while a steel and wood panelled wall, with a relief pattern of ovals, introduces a contemporary note on the other. A water wall feeds a canal that widens into a still pool where flag irises and water lilies can grow. **Contact** 01544 232035, www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk





Michael Balston and Marie-Louise Agius

Plot MA19
Sponsor Delancey
Contractor Willerby Landscapes Ltd
Theme A contemporary urban garden rich in shrubs and trees

Visitors to the show will be able to step a little way into this urban garden on a wooden deck, lean on the glass balustrade and look across to the shrub-rich woodland planting that forms one side of this design composed mainly of organic shapes. A sinuous waterway, dropping down through a central pool and a series of small weirs, recalls the River Lea where the East Village, on the site of the Athletes Village at the Olympic Park, is being constructed. A mix of native and exotic trees creates a natural rhythm through the herbaceous planting. A contemporary seat of timber uprights and slatted glass provides a sheltered viewpoint down the garden.

Contact 01380 848181, www.balstonagius.co.uk



Jo Thompson

Plot MA3
Sponsor FERA (Food and Environment Research Agency)
Contractor The Outdoor Room
Theme Help stop the spread of plant pests and diseases

A simple design of two contrasting parts creates a punchy visual message about the dangers of imported plant diseases and how their spread threatens the British landscape. An avenue of dying trees leading to a lifeless pool of black water frames one side. Beyond, a gravel path leads through allées of the soft, romantic planting normally associated with Jo Thompson, in shades of pale blue, lemon, green and white, to a seating area. Here a large split disc sculpture in slate by Tom Stogdon offers views to both parts. There's a deliberate edginess to this design: the concrete wall panels bear the patterns produced by magnified pathogens, and the trees, all British species, are ones that are already under threat or could soon be, from pests and diseases.

Contact 01622 831536, www.jothompson-garden-design.co.uk



Adam Frost

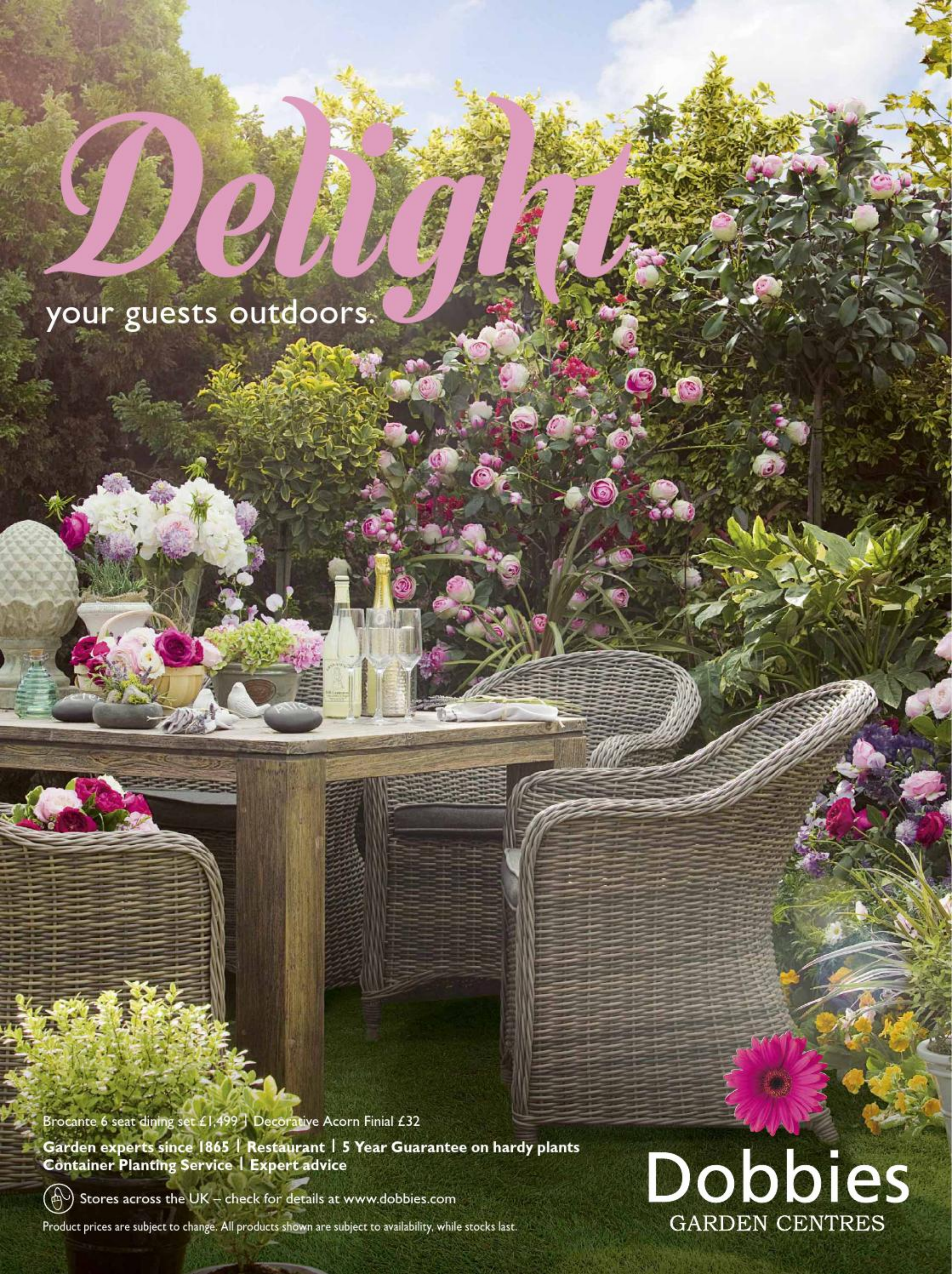
Plot MA20
Sponsor Homebase
Contractor Landform Consultants
Theme Family garden with room for edibles and wildlife

Adam Frost has chosen a grid design for this garden, which was inspired by the Barnsdale Ornamental Kitchen Garden, and mixes ornamentals with fruit trees, hawthorn hedging, soft fruit, vegetables and herbs. A rectangle of lawn leads to a contemporary steel and stone outdoor kitchen in the centre, framed by drystone walls, which double as shelters for wildlife. This is a garden where children can dip for pond creatures in steel tanks and follow gravel 'picking paths'. An oak arbour frames the eating area at the back of the plot. Steel elements link the different parts of the garden, while the oak beehive under the fruit trees is echoed in the shape of the water feature on the back wall.

Contact 01572 812186, www.adamfrost.co.uk

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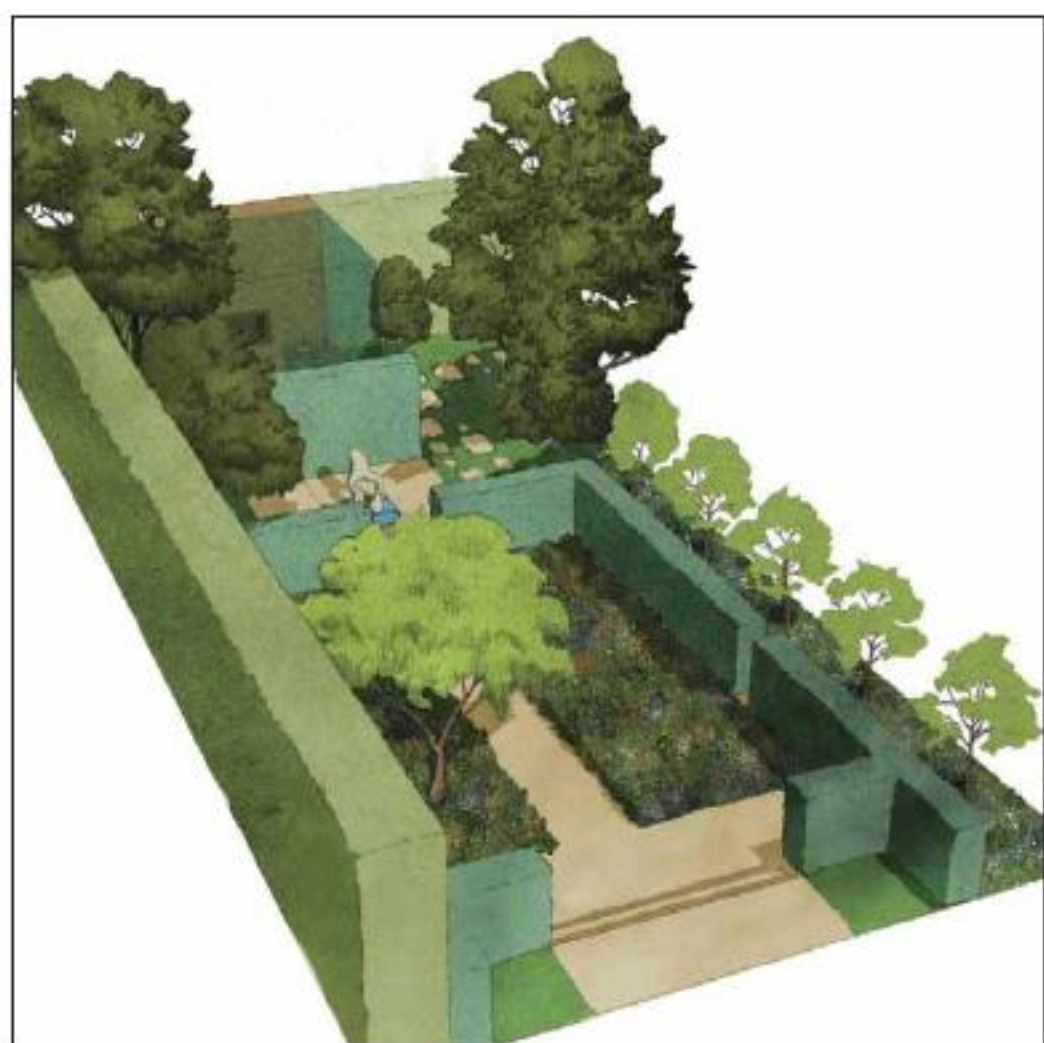
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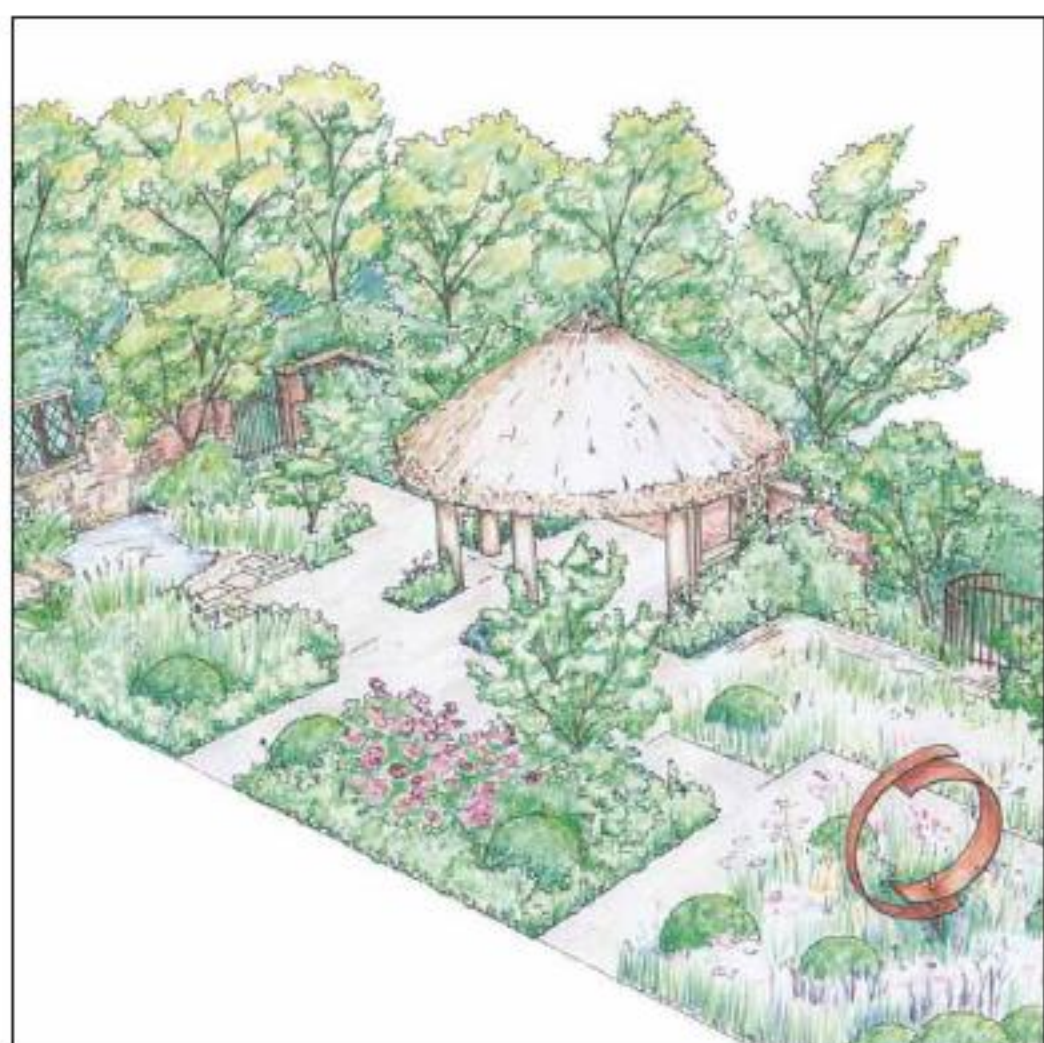


Chris Beardshaw

Plot	RHW/1
Sponsor	Arthritis Research UK
Contractor	Keith Chapman Landscapes
Theme	A garden that charts the experience of an arthritis sufferer

A geometric design composed of three interconnected but discrete parts allows Chris Beardshaw to encapsulate the journey of an arthritis sufferer from initial diagnosis and confusion to living life to the full. Stepping stones lead from an open-sided glass shelter among woodland planting in blues, greens and whites to an open space framed by clipped yew hedges and a central pool with a contemporary sculpture. From here, the reclaimed stone path leads into a large rectangular garden, enclosed by a clipped box hedge, with two herbaceous borders filled with richly coloured flowers in shades of purple, orange and blue including *Iris* 'Supreme Sultan' and *Lupinus* 'Masterpiece'.

Contact 01242 233311, www.chrisbeardshaw.com



Roger Platts

Plot	MA15
Sponsor	M&G Investments
Contractor	Roger Platts and NR Jupp
Theme	Chelsea show garden planting, through its 100-year history

The theme of Roger Platts's design is neatly encapsulated in the 2m-high Corten steel sculpture at the front of the garden, which traces the letter C twice: Chelsea Centenary. It also provides a window down the garden from the front section, representing contemporary show gardens with its formal planting of grasses, evergreens and perennials and a separate wildflower bed. The central section is filled with the romantic English flowers and shrubs and a rustic pavilion normally associated with Platts's designs. Other elements are borrowed from the first Chelsea gardens, with rocks, a pool and, beyond the garden wall, a thicket of holly, laurel and rhododendrons.

Contact 01732 863318, www.rogerplatts.com



Nigel Dunnett and The Landscape Agency

Plot	MA13
Sponsor	Royal Bank of Canada
Contractor	Landform Consultants
Theme	Biodiverse roof garden that harvests rainwater

A central wetland, planted with eye-catching *Meconopsis* (Fertile Blue Group) 'Lingholm' and *Primula bulleyana*, is the powerhouse of this roof garden, enabling rainwater run-off to be harvested and circulated round the garden. *Betula papyrifera* trees and *Cornus florida* shrubs create privacy and areas of shade, which are underplanted with woodland species, while the open, sunny areas, and the green roof on the bird hide support a bright mix of perennials, bulbs and grasses, chosen to attract wildlife. A winding deck leads to shady and sunny seating areas and a terracotta living wall, planted with succulents, makes an unusual screen at the end of the garden.

Contact 0114 2220611, www.nigeldunnett.info

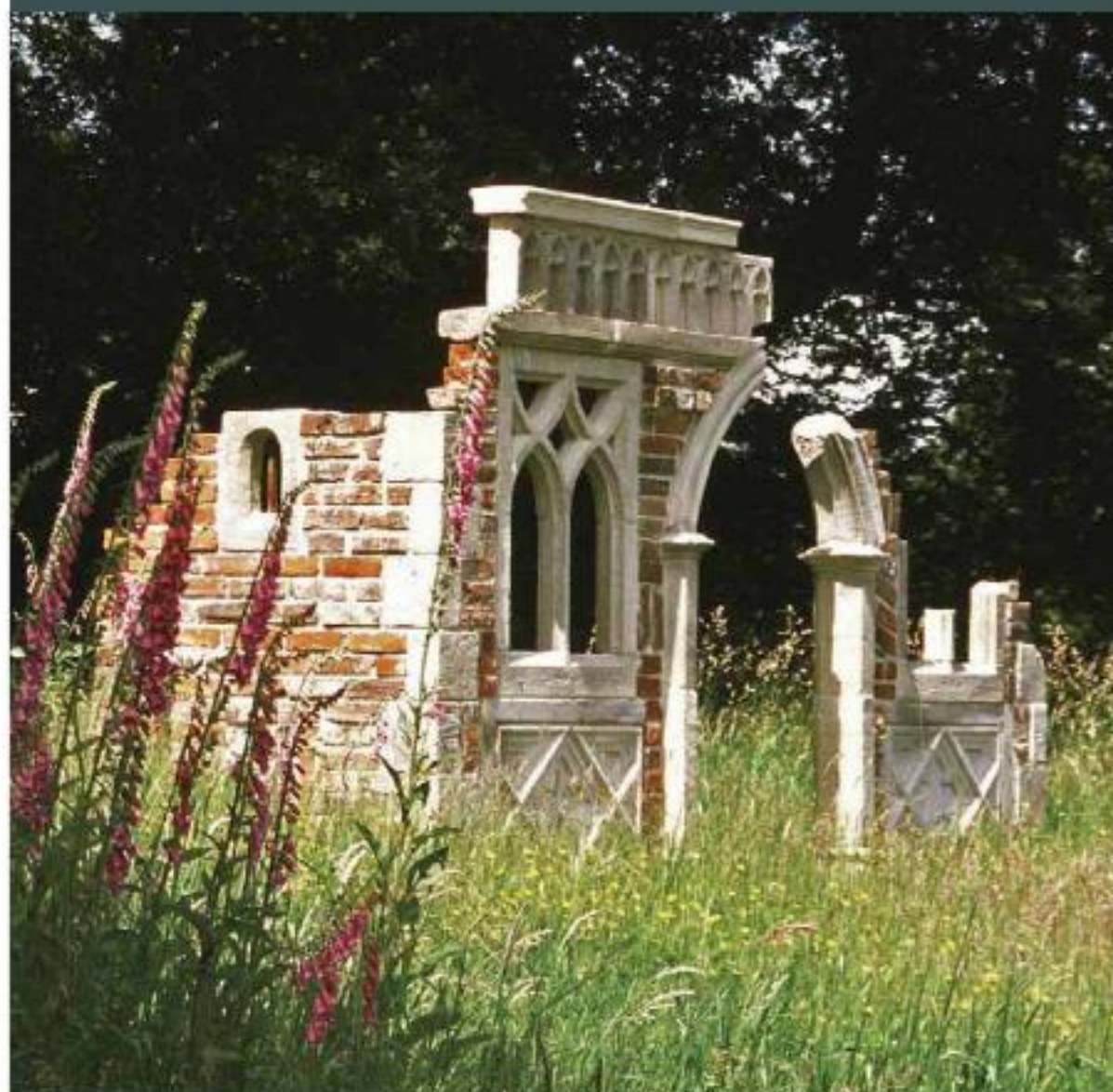
01904 691630, www.landscapeagency.co.uk

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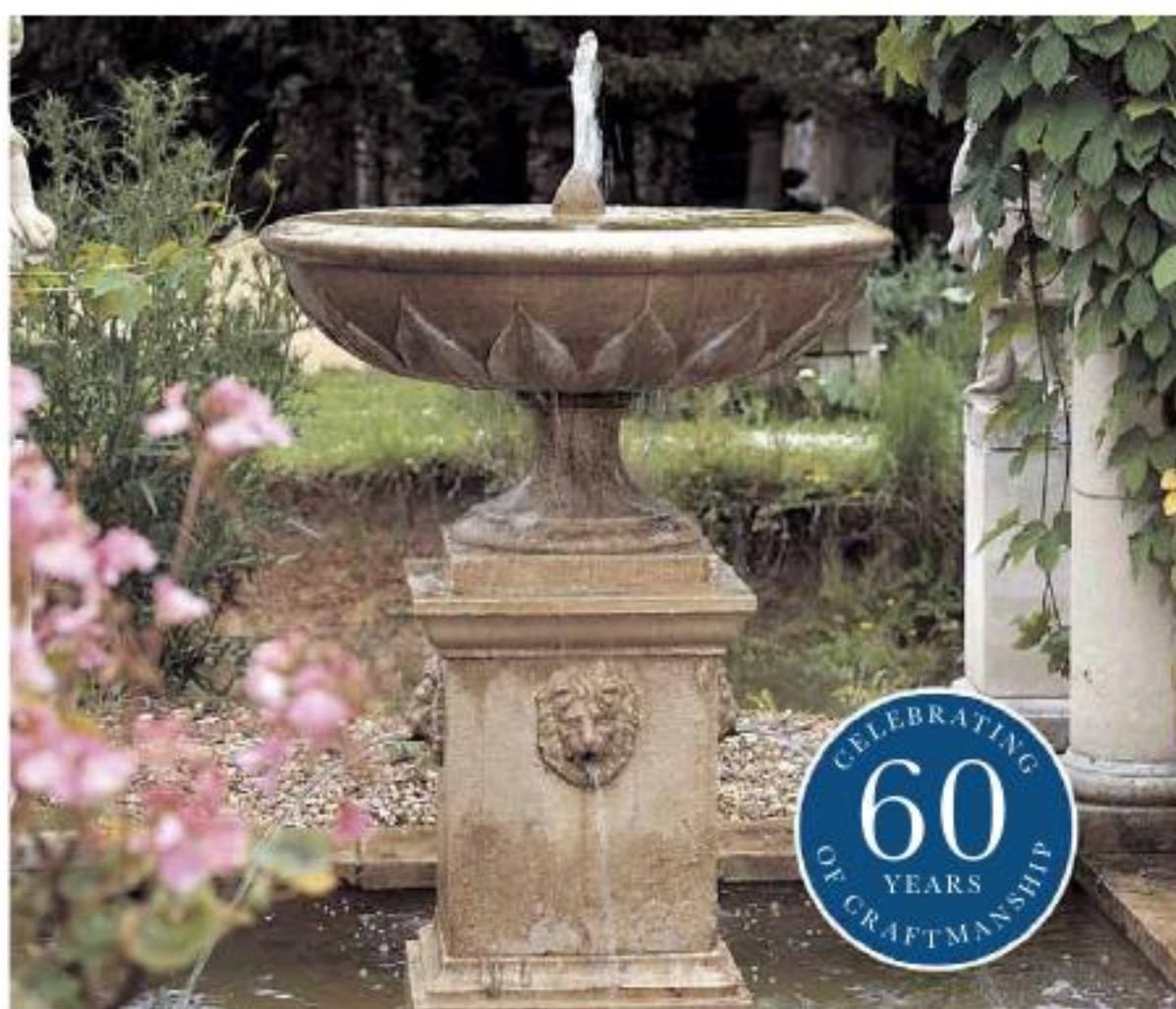
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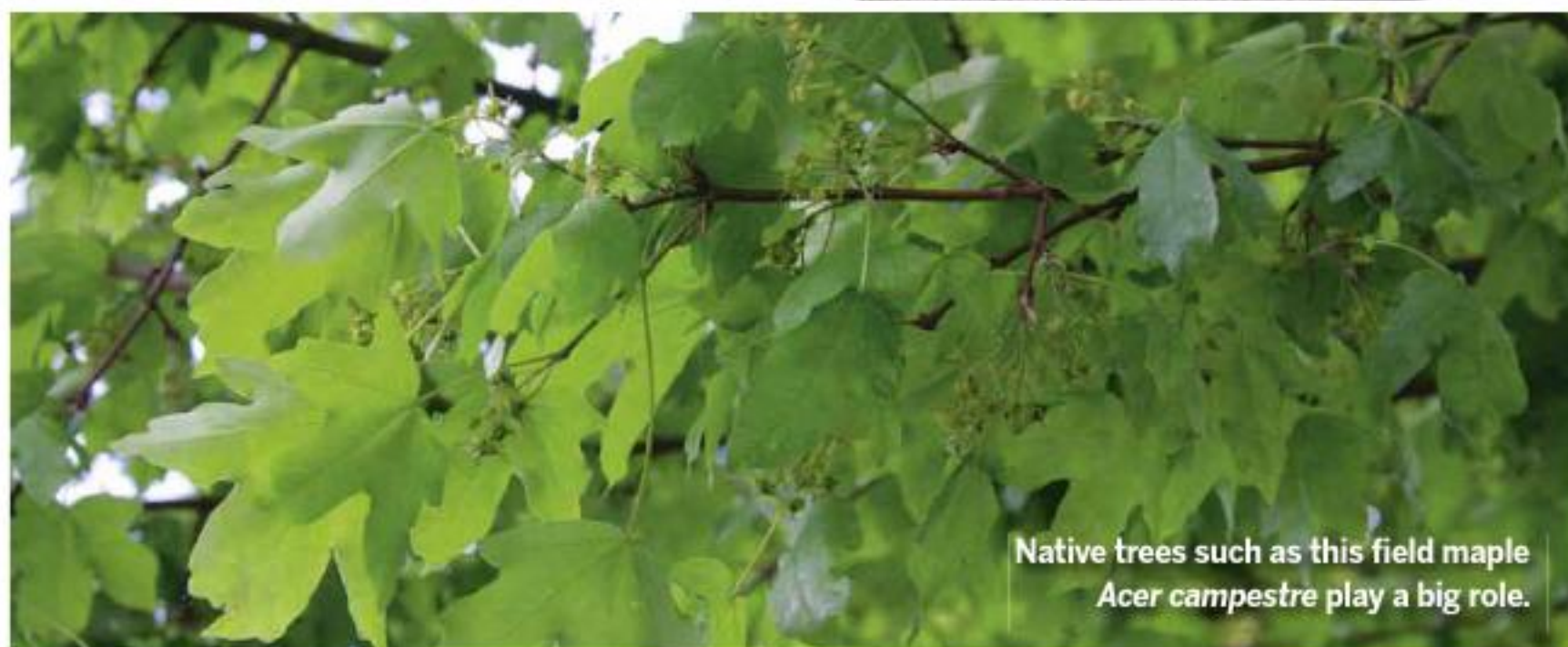
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Rhododendron macabea
at the East Village garden.



Catherine MacDonald's Fresh
garden for Susannah Hunter.



Native trees such as this field maple
Acer campestre play a big role.



Rainwater harvesting is an
important theme this year.

Chelsea trends

It's a showcase of the very latest in planting and design,
with ideas that can influence what we do in our own gardens.

Annie Gatti asks what we'll be taking away this year

Native trees and shrubs have enjoyed more and more presence at Chelsea in recent shows. But this year, they are grabbing our attention on Main Avenue as well as on the smaller gardens, as several designers make them the focus of their gardens. This is good news for British growers. It's also good news for visitors to the show as they will take away multiple images of how familiar species such as field maple, guelder rose, hornbeam, willow, hazel, hawthorn and horse chestnut can be used in imaginative ways: anchored in bold, geometric frameworks,

grown in pleached, multi-stemmed and other clipped forms, celebrated for their strong outlines and fresh green foliage. Fruit trees, especially mature apples and pears, are the tree of choice for Adam Frost, Andrew Wilson and Gavin McWilliam and several designers are reintroducing us to rhododendrons – appropriately in the show's centenary year, as they were much used in the first show gardens. Chelsea first-timer Marie-Louise Agius, working alongside Michael Balston, is hoping to make a 4m-high *Rhododendron macabea* from Exbury a



Flowerheads on
Cyperus papyrus.



Enkianthus perulatus,
Ulf Nordfjell's choice.



Meconopsis (Fertile
Blue Group) 'Lingholm'.



Mature fruit trees will
be prominent this year.



Representative tree trunks in
the Sonic Pangea Garden.



The planned floating roof pavilion
in the Cloudy Bay Discovery Garden.

centrepiece of the shrub-rich East Village garden, which also features the less familiar Japanese shrub *Enkianthus campanulatus* with cream to pink bell flowers and flame-red foliage in autumn. Ulf Nordfjell has chosen clipped *Enkianthus perulatus*, which bears white flowers, as a repeat motif in his design.

Grasses seem to be used more sparingly but old favourites such as peonies, foxgloves, irises and aquilegias remain popular. In damp zones cyperus sedges have been selected for their spiky flowerheads.

Sustainability is a strong theme and several designers have chosen their flowering plants with pollinating insects in mind. Water harvesting is also an important element, from a simple butt in the Artisan garden for WaterAid, to the billabong and rainwater tank in Philip Johnson's Trailfinders Australian garden and the wetlands of Nigel Dunnett's rooftop garden where

"Sustainability is a strong theme, as in recent years, and several designers have chosen their flowering plants with pollinating insects in mind"

Meconopsis (Fertile Blue Group) 'Lingholm' is likely to be the star plant.

Several designers have stepped on to the Chelsea stage for the first time via Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and are exhibiting in the Fresh category, including 19-year-old Jack Dunckley, with a design that explores contrasting textures in equatorial

plants. The Fresh gardens range from the uncompromisingly conceptual – Fernando Gonzalez's *The Sound of Silence* evokes a Zen 'contemplative exercise along the road to enlightenment' through a single bonsai tree and rocks made from a man-made acrylic stone – to a contemporary rendering of a sacred grove in *The Sonic Pangea Garden* that uses ten 6m-tall spears forged in steel and aluminium to suggest tree trunks. These flood the garden with sounds from nature. Blackened tree trunks in James Basson's *After the Fire* design are a dramatic reminder of a ▹



Sitting Spiritually's RHS Centenary Bench.



Rusted steel cirrus trees above Marshall Murray's stand.

▷ natural disaster – a forest fire – from which the landscape of southern France can gloriously recover.

Garden buildings are absent from two of the main contenders for Best in Show – Christopher Bradley-Hole and Ulf Nordfjell, who has instead provided shade with a clean-lined timber pergola attached to a copper panel – but they have been imaginatively presented by Philip Johnson with a 3m² studio made from two timber-framed interlocking polygons which should offer the best bird's-eye view of the show. There's also Andrew Wilson and Gavin McWilliam with their open-sided pavilion capped with a fibreglass roof, which floats above a grove of copper rods in the Cloudy Bay garden. Jamie Dunstan's architectural shelter in the middle of his strongly angled design in the As Nature Intended garden is a melding of woven willow and clipped yew.

For boundaries, most designers have chosen clipped trees or hedges. Interesting exceptions are Christopher Bradley-Hole's charred oak wall, inlaid with a seam of flints; Robert Myers' steel-framed patterned plywood panels; Jo Thompson's concrete panels imprinted with the shapes of magnified pathogens; and Catherine MacDonald's Fresh garden for Susannah Hunter, which uses panels of Susannah's trademark appliqué leather.

The design of trade stands is taken very seriously and many exhibitors employ garden designers for their planting schemes. Look out for Charlotte Murrell's design for the BALI stand and Chris Gutteridge's planting for SGD. A striking canopy of cirrus trees in rusted steel will rise above Marshall Murray's stand, which features new works by Walter Bailey, Barbara Myers, Rachel Ducker and Ben Barrell. And on the Sitting Spiritually stand, visitors can try out the RHS Centenary Bench, a limited edition design in oak influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement. This handsome seat will be gifted to Hyde Hall after the show. □

Not to miss

Elegant outdoor dining with the modular, oak A la Carte system topped with dark grey worktop, for housing fridge, sink, storage, drinks cabinet and more, plus three-tier Porter trolley (pictured). **Gaze Burvill, MA9.**



Landform in a small garden, with pools for reflection. **The Willmott Whyte Garden, FR3.**

A stream like no other, made of blue leather with appliqué water lilies, covered with glass for reflection. **The Massachusetts Garden, FR5.**



Communion sculpture by Tom Stogdon on the Hillier Nurseries stand. Also see Tom's striking 2m-tall Rural Town piece on his own stand. **Great Pavilion, Hillier Nurseries, GPD11; Tom Stogdon, RGB1.**

Lots of ideas for green roof planting mixes, including alpine strawberries and herbs, on small structures such as bike stores and bird tables. **Oxford Green Roofs, PLW1.**

Wild Davis, stunning mild steel rings sculpture in the shape of a tree fern, with a canopy spread of 1.6m, by Guild. **Marshall Murray, FR38.**

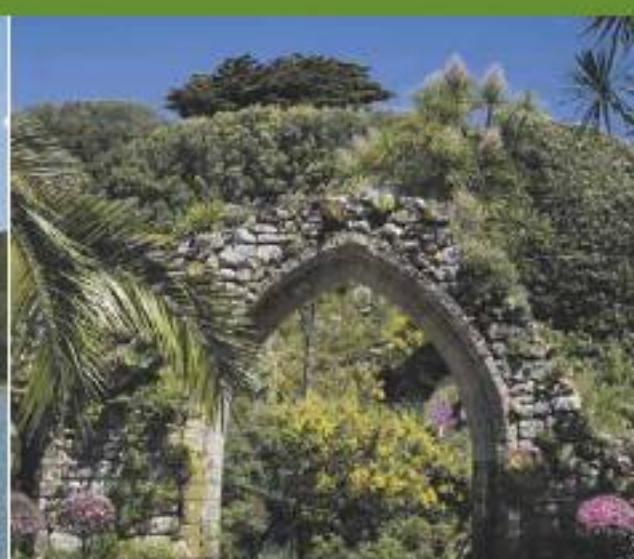
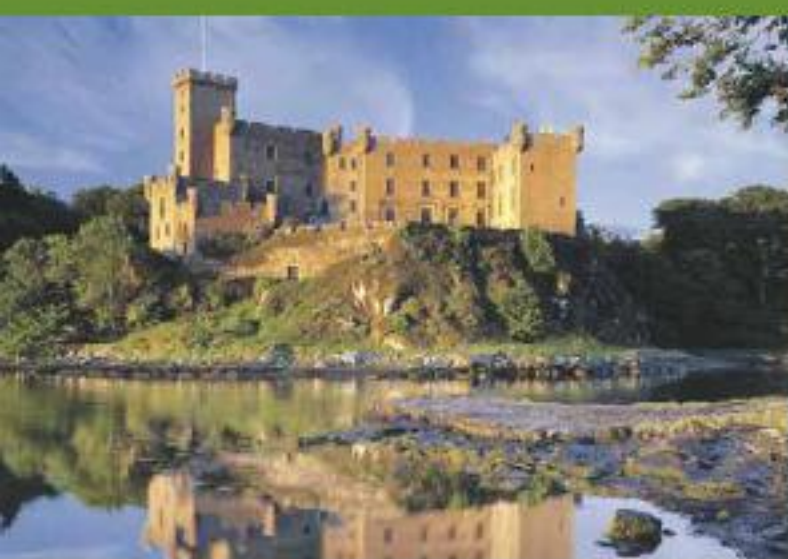
The planted chaise longue, with *Lippia nodiflora* creating a soft cushion for the seat, and *Alchemilla mollis* and *Eragrostis* making a textured cover for the back. **The Sonic Pangea Garden, FR2.**

Who said berberis is boring? Take a look at *Berberis temolaica*, a glaucous-leaved species with small yellow flowers in spring and purple-bronze leaves in autumn. **Cloudy Bay Discovery Garden, FR1.**



Ideas for bringing a 'meanwhile space' – a site, usually rundown, that's waiting for redevelopment – to life, with edibles, plants for wildlife and even art features. **Great Pavilion, RHS Environment, Groundwork UK.**

A feathery-leaved, aromatic native *Meum athamanticum* with white flowers, like a more delicate, compact cow parsley. **Get Well Soon garden, SEW8.**



Britain & Ireland in Bloom

A springtime cruise of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales aboard the MS Island Sky
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Noble Caledonia can take you almost anywhere in the world you may care to go, but remember that some of the finest scenery, fascinating history and most endearing people may be found close to home. In spring 2014 we shall be returning to many of our favourite places which have proven so popular with our passengers. High on our list is the lovely traffic free island of Trese in the Isles of Scilly where the Abbey Gardens are an absolute delight. Likewise, we find it difficult to contemplate such a trip without a call at the island of Iona, a place of rare spiritual power and exceptional natural beauty.



Of course our main emphasis will be on gardens and without doubt we shall visit some of the best in the Kingdom and Ireland. Added to these scenic delights, we will also touch upon ancient history – Iron Age villages, mysterious standing stones and early Christian culture.

The Itinerary

Day 1 - Poole. In the afternoon, embark the MS Island Sky.

Day 2 - Sark & Alderney. We will start the day with a morning on Sark, a beautiful and peaceful place where we will visit the lovely Seigneurie Gardens. During lunch we will sail across to Alderney, visit the Alderney Museum and stretch the legs on a cliff top walk, admiring the dramatic views.

Day 3 - Isles of Scilly. We will go ashore and spend the morning on the beautiful island of Trese. Walk from the beach along pretty, traffic free lanes to the Abbey Gardens. These amazingly attractive sub-tropical gardens are an absolute delight and at this time of year will be at their most colourful. In the afternoon we will travel by boat to St Agnes, an island of rare charm which is totally unspoilt.

Day 4 - Waterford, Ireland. From our berth in the town of Waterford we will drive to Mount Congreve, a spectacular woodland garden on the banks of the River Suir. This privately owned seventy acre garden is

particularly stunning in spring.

Day 5 - Dun Laoghaire, Dublin. Drive out into the Wicklow Mountains and the wonderfully sited gardens of Powerscourt, 47 acres of Italian, Japanese and walled gardens. Continue to Mount Usher, a lovely garden on the banks of the Vartry.

Day 6 - Portmeirion & Bodnant, North Wales. From our berth at Holyhead we will embark on a full day tour visiting Portmeirion, Sir Clough Williams-Ellis extraordinary Mediterranean village in the shadows of Snowdonia and Bodnant Garden, an 80 acre garden in the most divine of settings.

Day 7 - Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland. This morning we will drop the Zodiacs to cruise the peaceful Strangford Lough. After an early lunch we land on the eastern shore for an afternoon at Mount Stewart. Planted in the 1920s by Lady Londonderry, it is a stunning mix of Mediterranean influenced planting in a series of outdoor rooms which give way to a wilder woodland space with plants from every corner of the world.

Day 8 - Gigha & Islay, Scotland. Our first call in Scotland will be to the beautiful island of Gigha where we will spend the morning in the gardens of Achamore House. During lunch sail across to the island of Islay. Landing at Port Ellen, there will be a choice of visiting the nearby privately owned Bowmore Distillery or the more

energetic might prefer a walk around Kilnaughton Bay.

Day 9 - Colonsay & Iona. Start your day with a walk on the attractive island of Colonsay. Explore the gardens around Colonsay House and enjoy the natural woodland and coastal settings. After lunch sail across to nearby Iona, a place of deep spiritual significance.

Day 10 - Inverewe, Loch Ewe. Here amongst the grandeur of the West Coast Highland scenery we will visit the splendid Inverewe Gardens where windbreaks made of local pines provide shelter for an amazing collection of exotic trees and shrubs. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon as we cruise along Scotland's North West Coast.

Day 11 - Dunvegan, Isle of Skye. This morning we land at the MacLeod stronghold of Dunvegan Castle. Tour the castle and gardens, following paths through woodland glades. Relax as we sail along the south coast of Skye and the Cuillin Hills.

Day 12 - Oban. Disembark this morning.

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NOBLE CALEDONIA



1 *Isoplexis canariensis*

The Canary Island foxglove has distinctive serrated dark green foliage rising up the stems, topped with a beautiful copper-orange flower spike up to 1.5m tall. The plant features in Chris Beardshaw's garden among a selection of other richly coloured flowers.

Supplier Kelways, www.kelways.co.uk

4 *Allium cyathophorum* var. *farreri*

A native of China, this charming dwarf allium forms a clump of grass-like leaves, with flowers in a deep violet colour that gently nod from the top of 15cm stems. Flowers in late spring/early summer. Look out for this one in Chris Beardshaw's garden.

Supplier Hortus Loci, www.hortusloci.co.uk

2 *Viola corsica*

A large-flowered, lesser-known species of viola with deep violet-blue flowers. These are produced in profusion from spring through summer above a mound of green leaves. It will be among the planting that punctuates Ulf Nordfjell's refined hard landscaping.

Supplier Crocus

5 *Selaginella kraussiana*

A stylish, matt-forming moss-like plant, perfectly positioned in the moist and shady conditions under the woodland canopy of Christopher Bradley-Hole's garden. Choose either of the cultivars 'Aurea' or 'Gold Tips' for its bright green fronds that contrast well with other forms of green.

Supplier Crocus

3 *Ligusticum lucidum*

Umbellifers are always a Chelsea favourite and this is a new one to the show, featuring in Jo Thompson's garden. *Ligusticum lucidum* is a perennial, producing masses of foliage and lacy white flowers in early summer. Perfect for a shady spot. Grows to 90cm.

Supplier Kelways

6 *Trifolium repens* 'William'

Featuring in Jinny Blom's garden, this creeping clover will be among the plants used to represent Lesotho's lush flowering meadows. The maroon-shaded green leaves, which darken through the season, along with its deep pink, pompom flowers, make this ornamental clover distinctive ground cover.

Supplier Hortus Loci

• Please note that the appearance of these plants is dependent on weather conditions leading up to the show.

Iris 'Sultan's Palace'

Irises are something of a Chelsea classic making a strong appearance in both the Great Pavilion and show gardens. Look out for *Iris* 'Sultan's Palace' in Christopher Bradley-Hole's garden. This one is notable for its rich, jewel-like, maroon-red flowers on tall stems. Flowers May and June.

Supplier Crocus, www.crocus.co.uk

Starring plants

Thousands of plants are grown for the Chelsea show gardens, so we asked some of the major nursery suppliers to pick their favourites

WORDS SORREL EVERTON

MOORCROFT

*living the passion for the
RHS Chelsea Flower Show*

*His cheeks are as a bed of
spices, as sweet flowers:
his lips like lilies, dropping
sweet smelling myrrh.*

Moorcroft, living the passion for RHS Chelsea 2013 as both historic institutions celebrate a centenary of wonder in floral visions.

These designs are three of five from the design studio of Moorcroft as the world famous art pottery celebrates her centenary year in a blaze of colours and superb artistry. You will find all of these designs hidden in a table in Stoke-on-Trent City Council Garden, and for those that simply want to take Chelsea home with them following the spectacular gardening celebration as the iconic RHS Chelsea Flower Show reaches its 100th anniversary at the Royal Hospital, these five limited designs are available from all good Moorcroft retailers from late May onwards.

Munstead Wood is not only the name of the famous Gertrude Jekyll's famous garden, but of the most beautiful of all roses which blooms in a crimson tide of petals. Moorcroft designer, Kerry Goodwin, has lovingly flushed her rose, like the **Munstead Wood** rose itself, lightly in the bud and as the centre gradually reveals itself, it becomes a very deep, velvety crimson. The overall design of Munstead Wood has much the same natural flow. The coral-pinks of the Euphorbia Griffithii 'Dixter' allow the Verbascum Clementine to dart like burnt-orange tropical fish complete with striking violet eyes into an exotic paradise created for Chelsea 2013.

Yet this rose has an admirable suitor in the form of **Kew**, the name of a Moorcroft rose design and of the David Austin 40th Anniversary rose for the 250th anniversary of the Royal Botanic Garden's themselves. With heads of pure white and delicate lemon-shading at the base of the petals, it opens from apricot buds; this rose is a show winner. Bathed in a lid of Pictum Fern and Cow Parsley by Moorcroft designer, Nicola Slaney, the stunning ginger jar echoes the heart of a pure spirit.

There is one vase design from Moorcroft's senior designer, Rachel Bishop, that will summon feelings of nostalgia in more than name alone. Named for Admiral Lord Nelson's lover. In the world of flowers, the **Lady Emma Hamilton** rose was released on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, the pivotal naval battle of the 19th century Napoleonic Wars that cemented Great Britain's naval supremacy for a century but at the cost of Admiral Lord Nelson's life. This rose has tight buds that are a most wonderful dark red with dashes of orange.

When fully open, through the Moorcroft colour palette, the flowers have the appearance of a ripe peach and float effortlessly around the vase. Set off against very dark, bronzy-green leaves Lady Hamilton's Rose pleads for her lover's attention against Polkadot Polly's mysterious, foxy pink and apricot hues. In the world of flowers, the gloves have been truly taken off!

Each vase is delicious, and fortunately is not competing for 'Best in Show.'

Please visit www.moorcroft.com for a full list of Moorcroft retailers. Alternatively, call us on 01782 820253 or enquiries@moorcroft.com



Kew
Height: 10cm



Munstead Wood
Height: 25cm



Lady Emma Hamilton
Height: 28cm



www.moorcroft.com

Tel: +44 (0)1782 820500 Email: enquiries@moorcroft.com



Best in show

Before the curtain goes up on Chelsea's centenary performance, here's a sneak preview of some of the loveliest items available to buy

PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM STYLING AMY GRENHAM



1 The traditional Chiddingstone **Planter** is hand-built from wood. £250 from Sparrow & Finch, stand CW2, 01892 861202, www.sparrowandfinch.co.uk. The 'Archie Jungle' **hat** from Pachacuti supports fair trade, £54, stand EA107, 01335 300003, www.panamas.co.uk. Books and cup, stylist's own.

Chelsea Flower Show *shopping*



2 Gather your blooms in this French **trug**, £45, from Sparrow & Finch, as before. Protect your hands in style with these 'Rendezvous' **gloves** from Ethel Gloves £13.50, stand EA25, 0800 783 2202, www.ethelgloves.co.uk



3 This **Wardian case** was found in a shed at the Tregothnan Nursery. Tregothnan will be selling replicas of the case, (think of them as a mini travelling greenhouse), for £295, stand MW2 and GPJ3, 01872 520000, www.tregothnan.co.uk

4 Relax on a 'White Rose' or 'Morrocan Rose' leather appliqué **cushion** from Susannah Hunter, stand PW2, £260 each, 020 7692 3798, www.susannahhunter.com. Pictured on the 2-seater 'Calypso' **wooden bench** in antique white, £199, from Hartman, stand RHW34, 0871 703 4100, www.hartmanuk.com.

5 Jekka's Herb Farm and Canton Teas Co have teamed up to bring a new range of **herbal teas** to Chelsea, all in **tea caddies** bearing Hannah McVicar's illustrations. £6-£7.50 each from Jekka's Herb Farm, stand SW1, 01454 418878, www.jekkasherbfarm.com. Cups stylist's own.

6 This **work jacket** from Carrier Company will be available at Chelsea this year for £58, stand EA9, 01328 820699, www.carriercompany.co.uk

Location Photographed at a Griffin Glasshouse, stand RHW32, 01962 772512, www.griffinglasshouses.com



If you love being active, don't let back, joint or muscle pain get in your way. **IBULEVE SPEED RELIEF MAX STRENGTH GEL** has the power of Ibuleve's strongest painkilling formula. Pick it up in the healthcare aisle, and discover gardening made easier with Ibuleve.

IBULEVE

PAIN RELIEF - WITHOUT PILLS

Contains ibuprofen. Always read the label.



The show gardens proved a draw even in the early days. Here the Rock Garden Bank gathers onlookers in 1936.

Right The plants have always been the real stars at Chelsea.



Centenary Chelsea

**Rockeries, royalty and revelry: a look at the highs
(and occasional lows) of 100 years of the Chelsea Flower Show**

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS RHS LINDLEY LIBRARY



Queen Mary inspects a rock garden at the first Chelsea, 1913.

Chelsea timeline

1913 First Chelsea Flower Show opens on 20 May for three days.

1926 The General Strike threatens to disrupt the show, but in the end only delays it for a week.

1951 A series of small tents is replaced by the Great Marquee, recorded by the Guinness Book of Records as the world's largest tent, at 3.4 acres.

1950s RHS Secretary Mr A Simmonds is alleged to have evicted scantily clad models from a rock garden, on the grounds that 'livestock of any kind' may not be exhibited at the show.

1959 *The Times* becomes the first newspaper to sponsor a garden. The Garden of Tomorrow features 'the most modern aids to horticulture', including a radio-controlled lawn mower.

1962 Designer John Brookes presents his first Chelsea garden.

1977 Carpet bedding makes a comeback, with a display by the Royal Parks. Increasingly ambitious bedding displays soon become a popular annual feature.

1988 Admissions are limited to 40,000 a day (cutting total admissions from 250,000 to 160,000) and for the first time, RHS members are charged for tickets (though they do get a members-only day). 10,000 members resign in protest.

1989 *Horticulture Week* asks: 'Why don't Chelsea gardens ever have sheds, dustbins or washing lines?'

1993 An antique gnome protests against the ban on his brethren by holding a demo and blocking the entrance to the show.

2002 A new rigid pavilion replaces the Great Marquee, which is cut up and made into 7,000 jackets, aprons and bags.

2001 A new category for small gardens, 'Courtyard' gardens is introduced, followed by the 'Chic' and 'City' gardens in 2001 – categories continue to evolve.

2009 James May exhibits a garden made entirely of Plasticine.

2011 The first garden since Babylon to hang in the air – Diarmuid Gavin's 'Irish Sky Garden'.

"The Benchers became increasingly disenchanted with the noisy and malodorous proceedings, and by 1911 the RHS was looking for another site"



n 20 May 1913, the Royal Horticultural Society held its Great Spring Show in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital for the very first time. It was a roaring success. So many exhibitors applied to join the show that only half could be accommodated, but of the 244 who made the cut, Kelways, Blackmore & Langdon and McBeans Orchids are still exhibiting a century later.

The show, pronounced the *Gardeners' Chronicle* on 29 May, 'exceeded all expectations', 'so large and numerous were the groups, and so magnificent the quality of the varied exhibits'. A massive single tent extended over two acres, enclosing 84 'large groups of flowers, plants and shrubs' and 95 exhibition tables. Out in the open, there was a chance to indulge the huge popular appetite for rock gardening. The first Gold Medal for a garden went to J Wood of Boston Spa, with a rocky scene that might 'easily be imagined to be a bit of the Yorkshire Fells bodily transported South'.

The Society's experience of shows had not always been so glorious. Its very first exhibit appears to have been a potato, proudly displayed by a Mr Minier in 1805. But there was no thought of involving the public until 1827, when the Council, desperate for cash (the Secretary having embezzled the funds and hot-footed it to France), decided to hold a fête at the Society's garden in Chiswick. It proved such a money-spinner that it was repeated the following year, despite fears of the 'dissipation' such merrymaking might engender among gardeners. In 1829, however, disaster struck, in the form of torrential rain. Visitors, it was reported, stood 'ankle deep in water oozing from the

gravel; shrieks were dreadful and the loss of shoes particularly annoying.' This experience, of course, is perfectly familiar from Chelseas 1971 and 1995.

More sober shows continued to be held at Chiswick over the next two decades, but petered out in 1857, as the Society ran out of money. But it was during this time that a non-competitive system of medals was introduced very similar to that employed today. A great new garden at Kensington, backed by Prince Albert, and intended as a more accessible show venue, hosted the first Great Spring Show in 1862, but proved a financial disaster. In 1888, Kensington was abandoned, and the Show moved to the Inner Temple. The Benchers, however, became increasingly disenchanted with the noisy and malodorous proceedings, and by 1911, the RHS was looking round for another site.

Tea in a tent

In 1912 there was no show at all, as the RHS lent its support to an international horticultural extravaganza staged in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital. This, however, served to demonstrate the suitability of the site on the Chelsea Embankment, with its easy access and commodious lawns. Though the RHS leased only ten acres (the 1912 exhibition took 28), there was still room for 17 outdoor show gardens. The Royal Artillery Band provided music. Tea could be taken in the tent for 1 shilling or on the lawn for 1/3d. There was also an area presciently labelled 'Second Class Refreshments.' There was blood royalty in the shape of Princess Alexandra and horticultural royalty in Waterers of Bagshot, tree supremo RC >

Chelsea Flower Show *history*



1 'The Horticultural Fate', a cartoon by Paul Pry, depicts the Chiswick wash out of 1829.

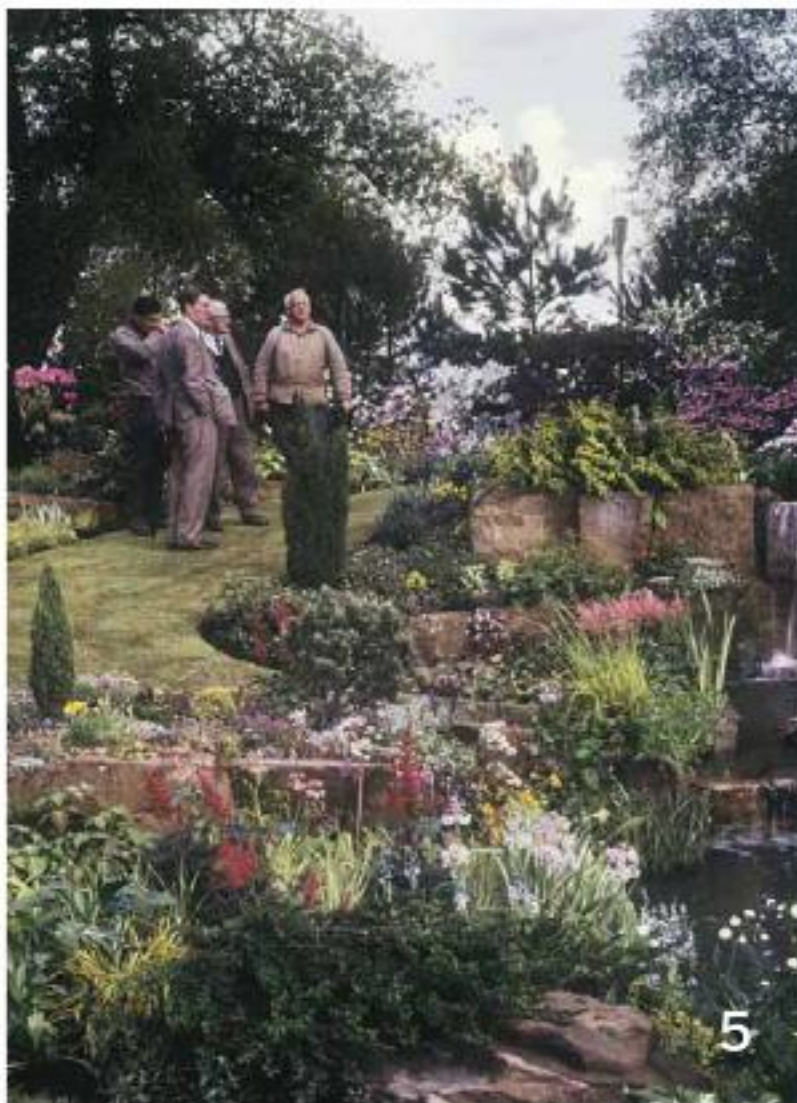
2 In 1959 *The Times* Garden of Tomorrow featured a radio-controlled lawn mower.

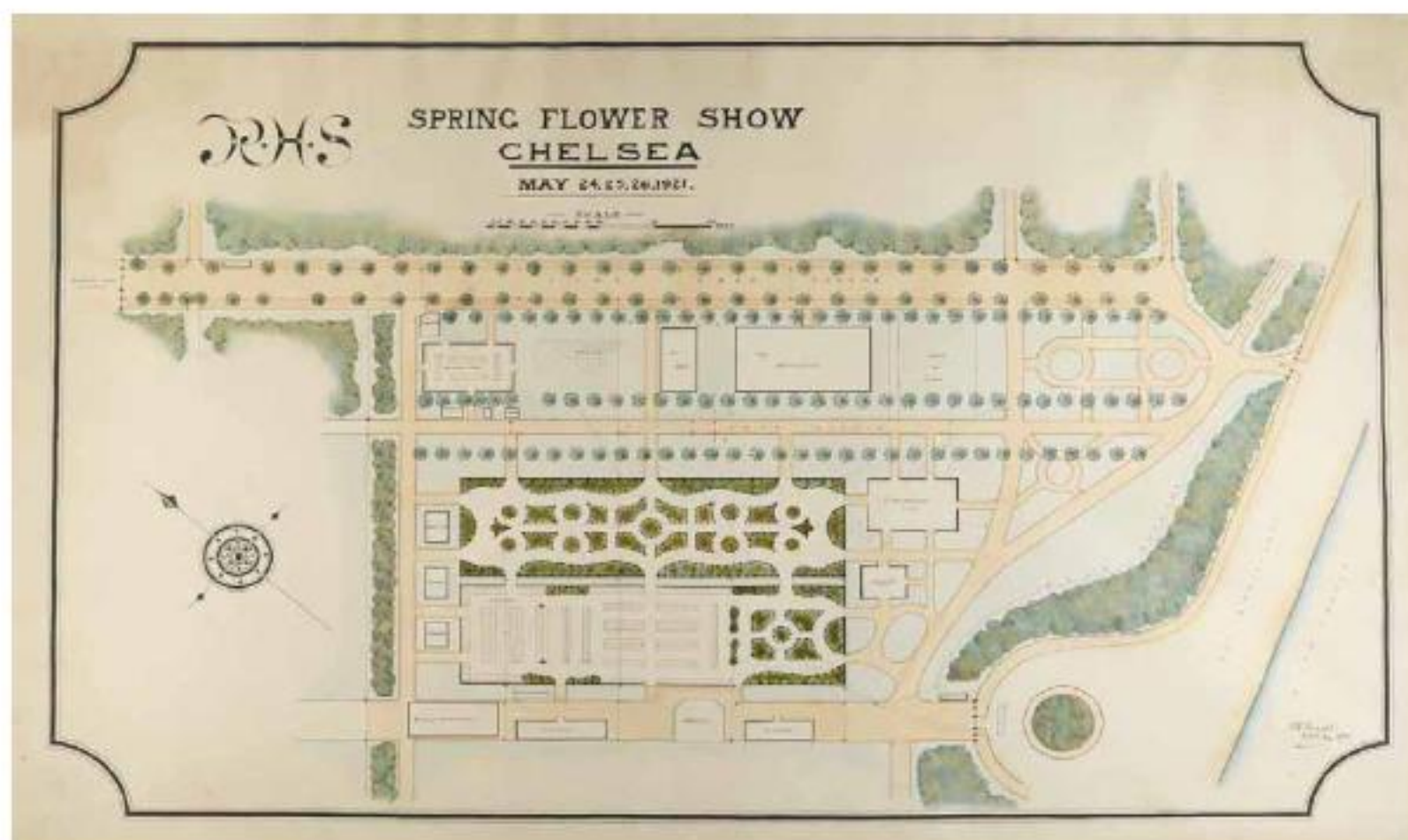
3 Building a rock garden in 1931. Cranes would move the biggest boulders into position.

4 Leaflet for 1938 Show. 'Fellows' or members, were still admitted free.

5 Elaborate rock gardens dominated from the first Chelsea right up until the 1950s, and enjoyed a renaissance in the 70s and 80s.

6 The enquiries desk team of 1913, including the director of Wisley (ST Wright, seated, second from left) and the RHS librarian (John Hutchinson, standing, left).





Projected plan for the 1921 Flower Show.

▷ Notcutt and Allwood Carnations. All the key Chelsea ingredients were in place.

A second successful show was staged the following May, but in August, war was declared. 1915 and 1916 saw low-key shows, but no more followed for the remainder of the war. When Chelsea resumed in May 1919, the gardening landscape had changed beyond all recognition. Yet the aristos still turned up on the first day to tour the show with their head gardeners. The Hon Vicary Gibbs, or rather his gardener Edwin Beckett, continued to sweep the board with his mammoth vegetables right up until 1930.

Garden theatre

In 1929 came the first hint of how Chelsea would develop, with a dazzlingly theatrical triptych of gardens from California, representing a redwood grove, Death Valley and the Mojave Desert. In fact, many aspects of present-day Chelsea were already familiar in the 1930s. Judges deliberated and royalty admired before the show opened to the public. Overcrowding was already a problem, leading to timed tickets and reduced-price evening admission. Even the moans were similar – in 1931 the *Daily Express* was already calling for Chelsea gardens to be more down-to-earth.

When war broke out, the Flower Show was cancelled for the duration, but an austerity Chelsea was staged, with tremendous effort, in 1947. The Coronation in 1951 was celebrated, as in 1937, with a great extravaganza of plants from around the Commonwealth. By the 1960s, the great rock gardens had fallen from fashion, and

the nurserymen who had dominated the show were about to give way to a new elite, the garden designers.

In the half-century that has followed, Chelsea has continued to hold a mirror up to our gardening preoccupations. The 1960s espoused gardening for the masses. The first garden for the disabled appeared in 1967; wildlife gardens became increasingly popular from the late 1980s; the 90s were all about Lifestyle and Design.

Chelsea has always been strong on nostalgia. But every few years comes a garden that breaks the mould – Christopher Bradley-Hole's minimalist Latin Garden in 1997, or last year's haunting DMZ Forbidden Garden, that proved that even show gardens can have seriousness and meaning. Always belatedly, Chelsea has taken up ecological and social concerns – banning limestone, peat and rainforest timber, and encouraging children, prisoners and community gardeners to show their skills.

Alex Denman has been running the show for the last five years. For her, what makes Chelsea unique is its heritage, its camaraderie, and its uncompromising commitment to excellence. "The quality has never faltered – from the glorious plants to the amazing gardens of recent years – and you don't get that excellence in both spheres anywhere else in the world." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

RHS Chelsea Flower Show: A Centenary Celebration by Brent Elliott (Frances Lincoln, £25) is reviewed on page 113.

A century of plants

Chelsea is often defined by a few key plants. Here's a selection that have made their mark.

1 *Rhododendron* 'Pink Pearl'

Exhibited by Waterers of Bagshot, this was a star at the first Chelsea Flower Show in 1913.

2 *Meconopsis delavayi*

The first Chelsea introduced the ravishing blue Himalayan poppy, which was awarded a First Class Certificate.

3 *Rosa* 'Paul's Lemon Pillar'

George Paul had been showing his roses at RHS meetings for 58 years before receiving this Award of Merit at the first post-war Chelsea in 1919.

4 *Rosa Peace* (= 'Madame A. Meilland')

The Peace rose, famously rescued from war-torn France, was introduced to Britain at Chelsea in 1948.

5 *Dicksonia antarctica*

Tree ferns became the statement plants of the style-obsessed 1990s, when there was a fascination with exotic planting.

6 *Iris* 'Quechee'

Christopher Bradley-Hole's 1997 Latin Garden prompted a fashion both for sparse planting and for sumptuous bearded irises in wine shades.

7 *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'

The Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year competition, for new introductions, was initiated in 2010. The first winner was this handsome small two-tone streptocarpus.

8 *Anemone* 'Wild Swan'

Blooming from May to November, with pure white flowers with blue backs, this shade-loving small anemone (40-45cm) was a popular winner in 2011.

9 *Digitalis* 'Illumination Pink'

This perennial foxglove in exotic peachy pink scooped the prize in 2012. The branching spikes are attractive to bees, and flower from June to November.

The RHS have also released an official centenary plant list. The public will be asked to choose their favourite and vote both online via www.rhs.org.uk and at the show.

Chelsea 2013 *history*



1 FLOWERS AND GARDENS BY JAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY 2 RAW COX / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES 3 MARIANNE MAUERUS 4 MAP / ARNALD ESCAT / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES 5 JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS 6 MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS 7 HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS 8 ROB WHIT NORTH GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY 9 TIM GAINES / ALAMY

Shopping at Chelsea

This year the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is celebrating its 100th year, rich in horticultural quality and tradition. Here are 12 of the exhibitors you can see at the show, offering fantastic products and services all year round. Visit them at the show or give them a call – see how they can add that touch of Chelsea magic to your own garden space.

BORDER SUNDIALS

Capel Tenison's Border sundials make high-quality armillary spheres and other sundials. Every sundial is handmade, engraved with your words and engineered to tell the time accurately wherever you are in the world. Come and visit us at Chelsea Flower Show on the Rockery Garden Bank.
TEL **01873 840 297** STAND NO **RGB 9a**
WEB www.bordersundials.co.uk



WHICHFORD POTTERY

STAND NO **From the RHS Shop, MA1**
Working in conjunction with the RHS, Whichford Pottery has created a 3D interpretation of a floral Union Jack on a classic halfpot to mark 100 years of The RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Each pot is imprinted with a commemorative stamp on the reverse.
TEL **01608 684416**
WEB www.whichfordpottery.com



THE CUTTING EDGE COLLECTION

STAND NO **PW27**
Regular award winners Cutting Edge will again be displaying examples from their range of distinctive garden buildings, all with architectural appeal and designed with the discerning gardener in mind.
TEL **01252 835735**
WEB www.cuttingedgegardenbuildings.com



WONDERLAND BRONZE

Invitation to the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. FREE cup of Clipper tea at Stand SR9 with 'Alice', 'Cheshire Cat', 'White Rabbit', 'Dodo', 'Knave of Hearts' and the 'Smoking Caterpillar'! Enchanting bronze sculptures lovingly modelled from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
TEL **07515 126 119** STAND NO **SR13**
WEB www.wonderlandbronze.com



IAN GILL SCULPTURE

Singing Lily Water Sculpture, is just one of many of Ian's amazing pieces on display at Chelsea this year. We produce a wide range of contemporary sculptures from corporate to courtyard. Limited editions also available. All handmade in the UK at our forge based in Hertfordshire. Commissions welcome.
TEL **01279 851113** STAND NO **RHW26**
WEB www.iangillsculpture.com



QUERCUS FENCING

Quercus will be demonstrating the importance of oak as a sustainable product, highlighting that all of its garden products are made using solid *Quercus Robur* oak. This year's stand is a homage to the nation's favourite native tree and due to patented open weave design, Quercus fencing ages gracefully, lasting for many years to come.
TEL **01458 223378** STAND NO **RHW36**
WEB www.quercusfencing.co.uk

CRANBORNE STONESTAND NO **PW3**

Cranborne Stone has supplied some of the UK's finest gardens and estates. Our beautiful range of handmade garden planters, vases, fountains, balustrade and benches, suit both the traditional and modern setting. For the keen gardener, our new 2013 garden catalogue will be available from the stand.
TEL **01258 472685**

**SITTING SPIRITUALLY**STAND NO **MW5**

The RHS Chelsea Centenary Bench is made under license to the RHS to celebrate 100 years of the Chelsea Flower Show. This beautiful Arts & Crafts inspired garden bench, made from FSC certified English oak, is limited to only 100 editions.
TEL **01297 443084**
WEB **www.sittingspiritually.co.uk**

**SECRET GARDENS FURNITURE**STAND NO **RHW22**

Hand forged rusted pyramids inspired by traditional willow supports. See our arches, arbours and gates at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.
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WEB **www.secretgardensfurniture.com**

**ETHEL GARDENING GLOVES**STAND NO **EA25**

Designed to fit the contours of a woman's hands, Ethel Gloves feature reinforced fingertips, an array of patterns to choose from and are completely machine washable. Fashion, function and protection, these gloves exist in a class of their own.
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**WILSTONE HOUSE AND GARDENS**STAND NO **RHW30**

The Kadai is the best firebowl/BBQ on the market. It is available as an original from 35 to 180cm in diameter or as a new recycled at 60/70/80cm and makes a really impressive social centre piece. Quote 'GIMAY' to receive a free low stand with any recycled kadai. See them at RHS Chelsea



Flower Show or visit the website.

TEL **01694 751283**EMAIL **sales@kadai.com**WEB **www.wilstone.com**



Head gardener Tom Coward has begun reinvigorating the planting while staying true to its spirit.

Past master

The team at Gravetye Manor are busily restoring the gardens using the naturalistic principles defined by pioneering gardener, William Robinson

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

In brief

Name Gravetye Manor.

What Historic plantsman's garden.

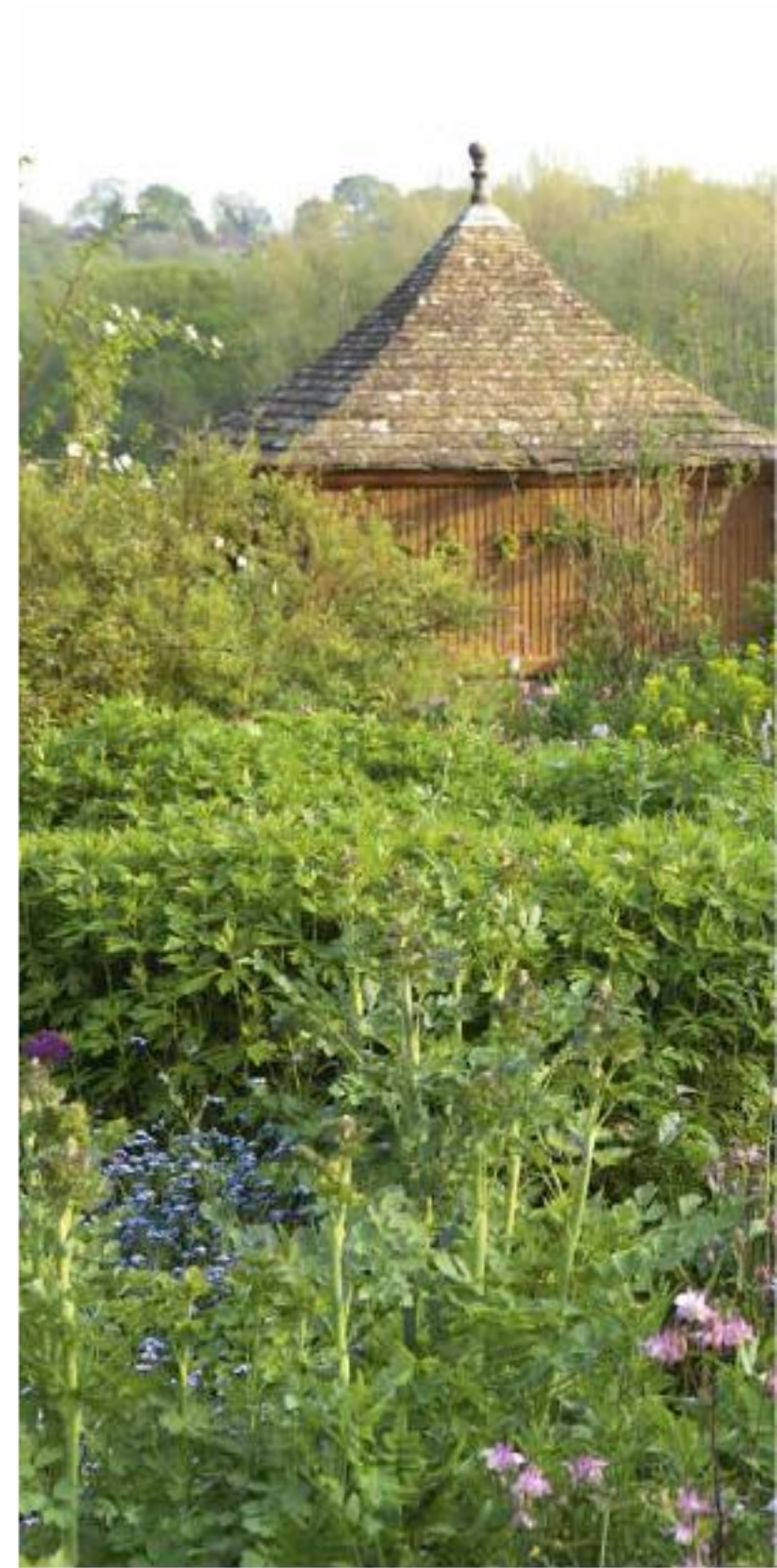
Where Four miles south-west of East Grinstead, Sussex.

Size 36 acres.

Climate Wet, exposed, but with sheltered pockets.

Soil Unusual mix of clays and sandy soils.

Points of interest Intense formal flower garden, woodland wild garden, azalea bank.





Gravetye Manor in Sussex was the home and garden for half a century of William Robinson. It was Robinson who initiated a crusade against the buttoned-up formality of high Victorian carpet-bedding, suggesting the use of hardy perennials in their place, and also advanced the notion that woodland and waterside areas could be actively gardened. Robinson believed that any and all plants – including exotics – could be useful subjects in a ‘wild’ garden, if deployed in the correct spirit. His books were arguably more influential in their day than Gertrude Jekyll’s, though his fame has now been wholly eclipsed by that of his Surrey friend. Perhaps Robinsonian thinking is due for a resurgence, since it chimes with so many contemporary preoccupations regarding naturalistic planting.

Gravetye today has a dreamy and rather exclusive air, as a high-end country-house hotel. It was in fact one of the very first in that genre – its transformation begun by Peter Herbert, who bought the estate in 1958 and remained in charge until 2004, during which time the garden gradually regained much of its old reputation. In 2010 City fund manager Jeremy Hosking (a long-standing patron of the hotel) bought the property and invited in Tom Coward, Fergus Garrett’s deputy at Great Dixter, as head gardener, heading a team of six. Since then, Tom has been busy battling weeds and applying the Dixter method of intensive successional planting and utterly ruthless

border management, where every plant is assessed daily for its qualities and impact.

The main garden area is the so-called Flower Garden, directly behind the manor. Robinson’s Flower Garden began life as a formal rose garden underplanted with carnations. Tom has decided not to try to ‘restore’ it, but to garden in a contemporary way, which he feels Robinson would have liked. “We feel what we do is historically correct,” he says, “because although you could research exactly what Robinson planted in 1885 and do it – that’s something Robinson himself would never have done. He was progressive. This approach is more respectful in its way – and more fun.”

In spring to early summer tulips take centre stage – the pink ‘Menton’, ‘Red Shine’ and ‘White Triumphator’ – alongside irises, bright euphorbias and swathes of forget-me-nots. A lack of height is a potential problem at this time of year, since the borders have to be dug after each season as part of the weed campaign. Tom’s secret weapon is the stately giant *Angelica archangelica*, which grows and flowers quickly and early, lending some structural balance to the magnificent show of azaleas. Grasses are also used for bulk, notably the delicate wild barley *Hordeum jubatum* and, increasingly *Pennisetum macrourum*. Echiums – both *E. vulgare* and *E. russicum* – are also much in evidence, along with persicarias, lupins and *Erigeron annuus* (“a wonderful thing”) while

Continued on page 68 ►

Top left The rich plantings – led here by tulips and alliums – surge right up to the rear of the house and its central doorway with porch.

Top right At the far end of the flower garden, a simple wooden pergola has been reconstructed; it provides visual support for the corner pavilion, which was a favourite spot of Robinson’s in old age.

Bottom left The vibrant colour palette used in the herbaceous plantings is partly an inheritance from Great Dixter, where Tom Coward was formerly deputy to Fergus Garrett.

Bottom right Much of the early summer interest is derived from foliage, though splashes of colour from the likes of these irises lift the scene while also pleasing the hotel guests.



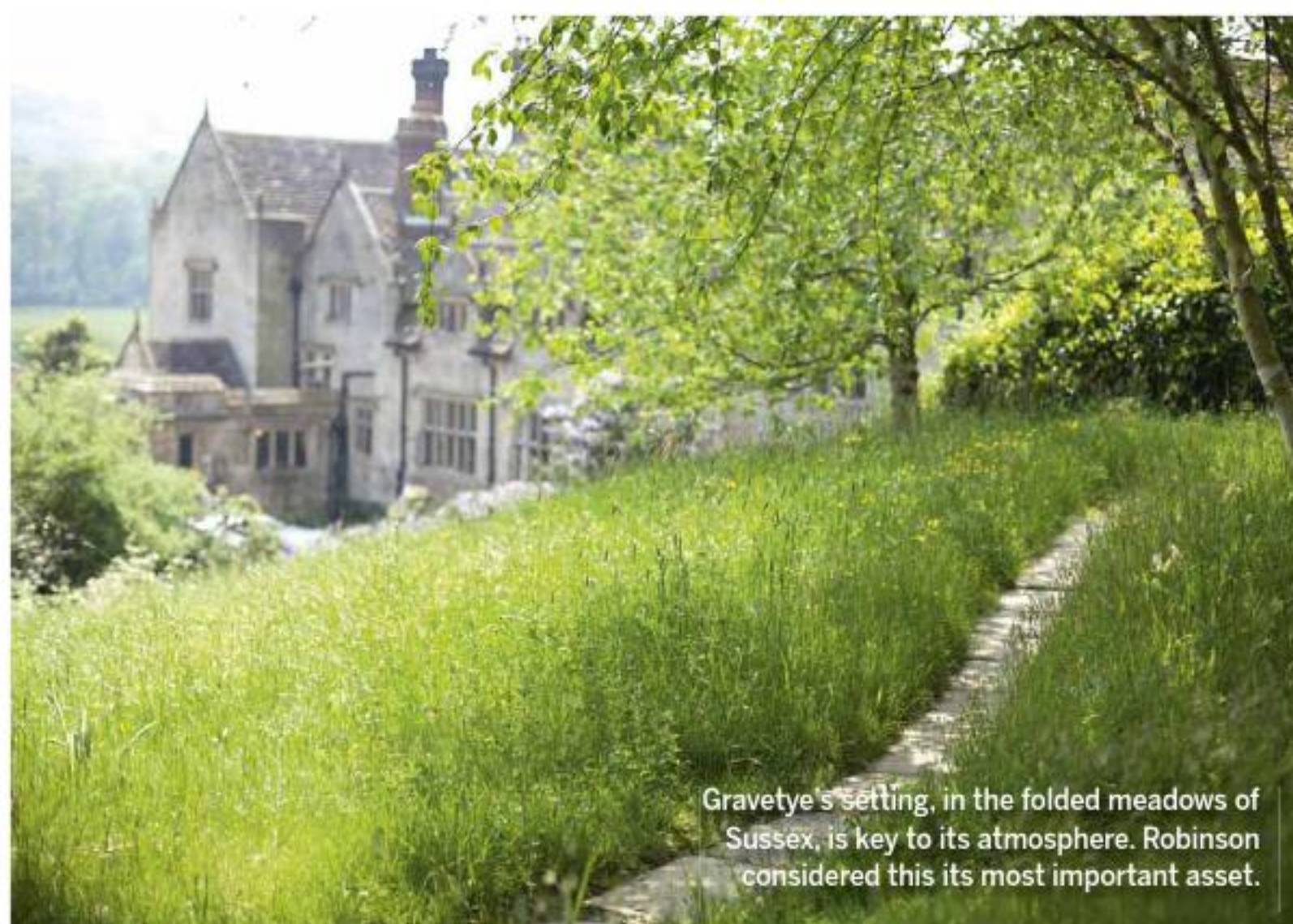
Dealing with weeds

When Tom arrived at the garden three years ago, he instigated a variety of policies aimed at eradicating the weeds. "In the flower garden we dug everything out and then cultivated really intensively – lots of tender perennials, biennials, annuals and bulbs. Forget-me-nots and ladybird poppies were particularly good for this. Then we dug it all up again and put in things like dahlias. Another technique we use for bindweed is to plant grasses – miscanthus, stipa, calamagrostis – and then use a selective herbicide (Blaster, for example) which kills broad-leaves only." The kitchen garden called for different treatment. "We just dug it, grassed it over and then put chickens on it for a year. In the end a lot of the weed management here is about hand-digging," Tom concludes. "The chemicals do work, but not as well as people say."

The combination of irises and tulips in the bed at the rear of the house is reminiscent of the work of the late Christopher Lloyd.

Opposite A wide range of textures, colours and forms is packed into a small space in the various sections of the Flower Garden.





Gravetye's setting, in the folded meadows of Sussex, is key to its atmosphere. Robinson considered this its most important asset.

▷ Californian and ladybird poppies provide bursts of colour.

Roses are also in evidence: favourite cultivars include 'Glyndebourne' and The McCartney Rose (= 'Meizeli') – Tom worked for the ex-Beatle early in his career. Species roses were important to Robinson and Tom is reinvigorating the population of *Rosa glauca*, *R. setipoda*, *R. x odorata* 'Mutabilis' and *R. moyesii* (this last had Robinson in raptures when it was brought back from Tibet). "Eventually, I want it to look like an old rose garden," Tom says.

The Flower Garden feels quite contained in its quiet magnificence, so it is only the more intrepid hotel guests who stroll up the path by the azalea bank, across the long strip of croquet lawn and up and into the woodland garden, which extends across the hillside above the manor house. This was the heart of Robinson's project at Gravetye and is now a work in progress. Tom is determined to recapture something of its original atmosphere, while extending the season of interest well beyond springtime with the addition of persicaria, crocosmia, asters and *Verbena bonariensis*, to complement the magnolias, davidias and other fine mature trees.

A little farther, and the visitor is rewarded by the kitchen garden, made in an unusual oval shape on the sloping site to match Robinson's prescription for maximum sunshine. As might be expected, vegetable and fruit production for the restaurant table is one of Tom's priorities.

There are other notable historic areas to Gravetye, several of which are soon to be awoken again. Leaving by the south door via the Little Garden, with its fine *Romneya coulteri*, a set of steps takes one down and 'out' of the garden to the Long Border at the foot of the high wall bordering the Flower Garden. This was infested with weeds but Tom has big (and complex) plans, including the use of "a fantastic verbenas called 'Lavender Spires' which I can't wait to plant – it grows to about 6ft tall". From here one can walk down to Gravetye's two lakes, which were once renowned for their waterlily collections. Tom's intention is to restore these and also restock the lily tank in the Flower Garden with some of the choicest specimens, as in Robinson's day. It will be pleasant indeed to be able to enjoy a cup of tea and a slice of cake while contemplating a magnificent member of the genus *Nymphaea* at eye level. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ.

Tel 01342 810567

Website www.gravetyemanor.co.uk

Readers' Day On 21 September writer Tim Richardson and head gardener Tom Coward will host a special Readers' Day at Gravetye Manor. Tim and Tom will both give talks, after which guests can enjoy a champagne lunch, followed by a guided tour of the garden. For full details go to page 11.

of Tom's favourite plants

1 *Angelica archangelica*

This self-sower provides height early in the season. It's great because it's easy to move about – you can edit it. RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b[†].

2 *Lychnis flos-cuculi* Jenny (= 'Lychjen')

I just like ragged robin – this one is a double form and a long season. It has a good strong pink colour, which can go a bit psychedelic with the ladybird poppies. USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Lupinus* 'Morello Cherry'

This has the longest flowering season of any lupin. 'Masterpiece' has a better colour, but in many ways this is the best lupin. USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Clematis* 'Miriam Markham'

This is one of the plants associated with Gravetye: it's named after the wife of Ernest Markham, who was Robinson's head gardener. USDA 4a-9b.

Centre Tom Coward, head gardener at Gravetye Manor.

5 *Camassia leichtlinii*

We have this in the orchard. Naturalised bulbs in long grass is something Robinson was known for, from the 1880s especially. AGM*. USDA 5a-9b.

6 *Orlaya grandiflora*

Fergus [Garrett] introduced this having seen it in Hungary. It's another plant with a good long season and it combines well with the ladybird poppy. AGM.

7 *Davidia involucrata*

We have an enormous specimen, one of the oldest in the country, which may even be an original introduction given to Robinson by [plant collector] Augustine Henry. It combines well with the azaleas. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Rhododendron luteum* hybrids

The plants on the azalea bank have always given us a free hand with colour. If it was all pastels it would be quite different.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



Pots for pollinators

Julia Wylie continues her series on container planting, this issue focusing on plants that are popular with pollinating insects

WORDS JULIA WYLIE PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY





Daredevils

I first saw these two self-seeding perennials cascading down a rocky bank together, in a very exposed country garden in which I worked ten years ago. The owner was a 'plantaholic' and avidly grew plants for her own garden and to sell for charity. We were always struggling to find homes for the new arrivals in the already brimming borders and had to protect the tender ones in winter. This pair however flowered effortlessly all summer, growing where not many would have dared. So they are perfect for containers, which if placed on a wall, near paving or gravel, will result in offspring colonising any available crack or space.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

Geranium pyrenaicum 'Bill Wallis' is sometimes difficult to find, because nurserymen don't appreciate its prolific seeding tendencies. *Agapanthus*, whose roots relish being constrained, are alternatives – I once admired them partnering erigeron daisies, which were peeping through a white picket fence in an Australian front garden.

These plants would also work well beneath potted olive trees. They are very attractive to bees and butterflies and will flower profusely from spring to late summer. Remove spent flower stems. Cut back the daisies in late winter. Grow both the erigeron and geranium from seed, or buy in 9cm pots if possible,

because they are quick to establish. Plant in pots in sun or part shade in well-drained loam-based compost (John Innes or similar) and water regularly, especially in dry weather.

Container

This long wooden box was built for the safe delivery of party glasses. A similar container could be made out of reclaimed scaffold or floorboards. It's worth using wood for containers if possible, because it is breathable and does not experience the same temperature fluctuations as metal containers, so it provides more natural growing conditions, especially on exposed roof terraces or coastal sites.

Plants

These are both very attractive to bees and butterflies and will flower profusely from spring to late summer.

1 *Erigeron karvinskianus*

Amount 5-7. **Height** 15-30cm.

Season Flowers May-November.

AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b†.

2 *Geranium pyrenaicum* 'Bill Wallis'

Amount 5-7. **Height** 30cm.

Season Flowers April-September.

RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.

Suppliers

Cotswold Garden Flowers Tel 01386 422829, www.cgf.net

Whitewater Nursery Tel 0118 932 6487, www.whitewaternursery.co.uk

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.



Meadow styling

These plants will always remind me of Sarah Price's garden at 2012 Chelsea Flower Show, where she used them to great effect under a grove of multi-stemmed silver birch trees. As one of her team of planters, I found some peaceful respite from the busy show ground while helping to create the mossy woodland corner. I was entranced by how the lime green leaves and delicate rice-like flowers of the grass *Melica altissima* caught the light and allowed the dark blue aquilegias, bright pink silene and tiny pink flowers of *Geranium robertianum* to gleam in the dappled shade. These marble-like pots of concrete and recycled polystyrene capture a memory of the meadow in that tranquil space.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

After the flower show I planted a similar composition along a shady path in my garden. The silene (red campion) flowered on and off throughout the summer, even though I had only planted them as tiny plugs the previous autumn. The melica seedheads also looked wonderful for most of the summer, but can be cut down after flowering to encourage a fresh flush of leaves and flowers – either way, the spent foliage and seedheads will need to be removed in late winter, because they start into growth from the base very early in the spring. Deadheading the aquilegias can encourage a second flowering, but leave a few seed heads

to mature, because they, the silene and the geranium will self-seed readily. Occurring naturally in alkaline, free-draining meadows, woodland edges and hedgerows they will all appreciate a rich loam-based, free-draining compost. Ensure containers have good drainage and holes.

Container

These stylish recycled pots look like stone or marble and can be painted to great effect, but unfortunately are not as 'eco' as I first thought, because they are made with concrete in order to recycle the polystyrene. Salvaged terracotta pots would be more sustainable.

Plants

These all attract pollinating insects.

1 *Silene dioica*

Amount 3-5. **Height** 60cm.

Season April-Nov. USDA 5a-9b.

2 *Aquilegia alpina*

Amount 3-5. **Height** 45cm.

Season April-May. USDA 4a-7b.

3 *Melica altissima* 'Alba'

Amount 5-7. **Height** 60cm.

Season April-June.

4 *Geranium robertianum*

Amount 1-2. **Height** 10-40cm.

Season Pink flowers early spring onwards. RHS H4, USDA 5a-10b.

Suppliers

Crocus Tel 0844 557 2233,

www.crocus.co.uk

Whitewater Nursery Tel 0118 932

6487, www.whitewaternursery.co.uk

NOTE: All quantities and plant sizes may vary according to container







Holiday snapshot

While walking through olive groves in Tuscany two summers ago, I was excited to see *Dianthus carthusianorum*, *Centaurea nigra* and *Daucus carota* flowering on the grassy banks, where they were able to escape the farmer's fastidious trimmers. I was so inspired that on our return to London I planted a group of three olive trees in our new empty garden with a similar collection of wildflowers and grasses beneath them. The olive trees screen the overlooking windows and along with the wildflowers transport me back to those dreamy days in the Tuscan countryside.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

I have substituted the perennial wild carrot with the similarly white lacy annual *Orlaya grandiflora* – *Ammi majus* would also work. Plus I have squeezed in the ladybird poppy for a clash of red and pink – it looks fantastic at Great Dixter, seeded among the silver-leaved, shocking magenta-pink-flowered *Lychnis coronaria*. I have also added a few clumps of *Allium sphaerocephalon*, whose small egg-shaped buds will soon swell and form claret-coloured cones.

For the annual orlaya and poppies to flower so early in the year, the seeds need to be sown September-October. Sow directly where they are to flower or into cell units or

individual pots, to avoid disturbing their roots. There is still time to sow the seeds – until the end of May – directly where you want them to flower later this summer. Or the perennial dianthus, centaurea and daucus can also be grown from seed, but won't flower in their first year – for more instant gratification buy them as plug plants or in pots.

Container

Place the pot in an open sunny site, with free-draining loam-based compost with added hydroleca or grit. Water regularly, because they are at your mercy in a pot. One that is a similar size to this water tank will help to make them feel as if they are growing in the ground.

Plants

These all make great cut flowers.

1 *Orlaya grandiflora*

Amount 5-7. **Height** 60cm.

Season May-Oct. AGM.

2 *Papaver commutatum*

Amount 2-3. **Height** 45cm.

Season Late spring to early summer. AGM. RHS H4.

3 *Dianthus carthusianorum*

Amount 3-5. **Height** 40-60cm.

Season May-Sep. USDA 5a-9b.

Suppliers

British Wild Flower Plants

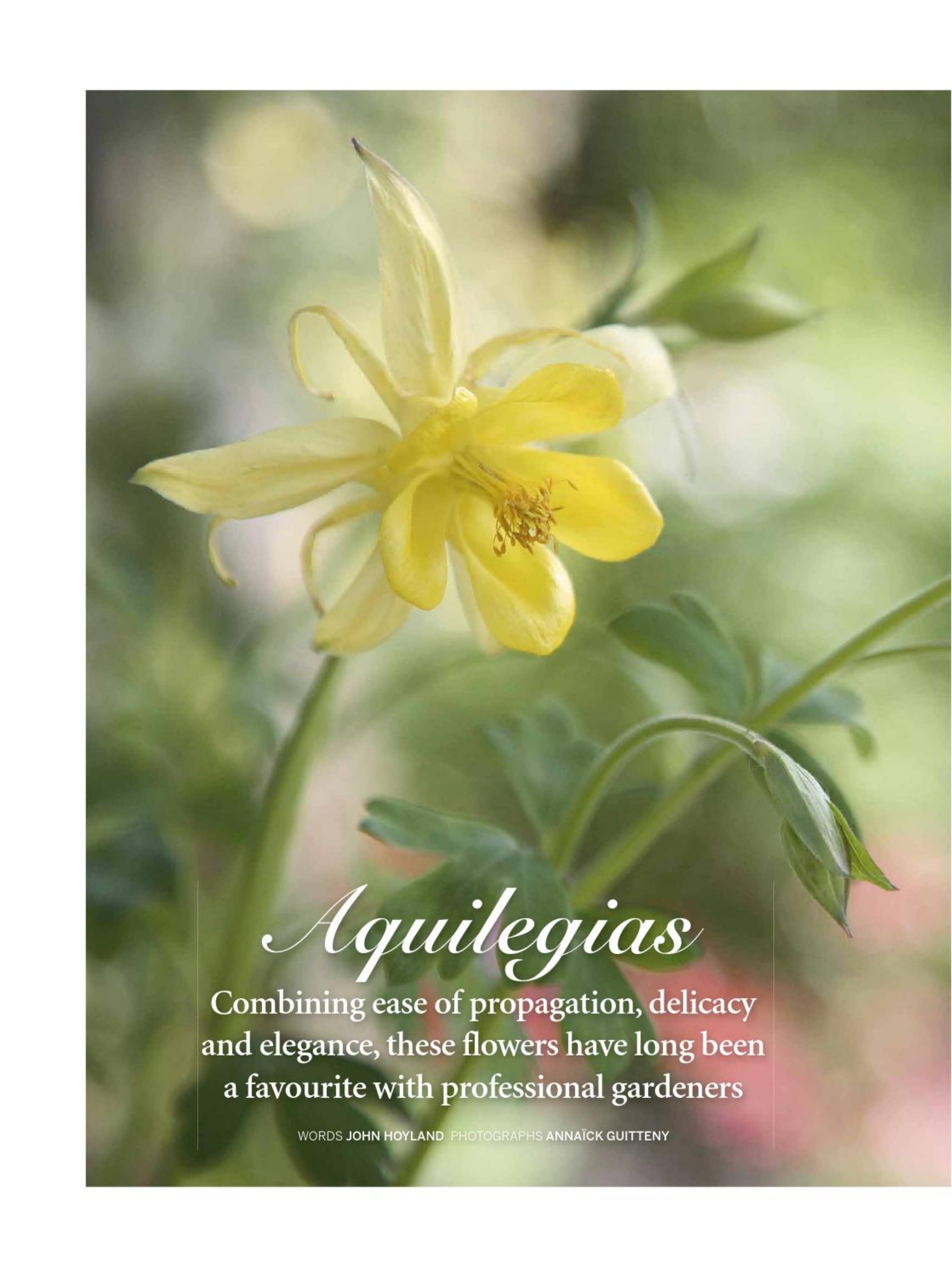
Tel 01603 716615,
www.wildflowers.co.uk

Emorsgate Seeds Tel 01553 829028,
www.wildseed.co.uk

Seedaholic Tel +353 (0)98 50666,
www.seedaholic.com

Contact details

For more of Julia's work
go to www.juliawylie.com



Aquilegias

Combining ease of propagation, delicacy and elegance, these flowers have long been a favourite with professional gardeners

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

In brief

What Aquilegia. Genus of about 70 species, mainly herbaceous perennials.

Common name Columbine, Granny's Bonnet.

Origins North America, Europe, Asia.

Season May and June.

Size From 10cm to 1m tall, most forming domes of foliage with tall flower spikes.

Conditions All grow best in dappled shade. North-American species prefer rich, moist soil that does not dry out. Alpine forms need free-draining soil.



John Hoyland is a nurseryman and owner of Pioneer Plants in Letchworth. He is a regular feature writer for GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

You never know when the urge to grow a particular plant is going to strike. Hanging in London's National Gallery is a small painting labeled simply 'Flowers in a Vase: Rachel Ruysch: about 1685'. Towering above the lilies, roses and peonies in the painting is a group of exquisite aquilegias. The flowers are so delicate and elegant that you immediately want to grow them.

The appearance of the flower in this and earlier paintings is an indication of how long gardeners have been growing aquilegias. Ease of culture and of propagation, combined with long-lasting flowers, have made it popular with gardeners for centuries.

The genus is widespread throughout the northern hemisphere from North America, across Europe into the Himalayas and out as far as Japan. Plants are variable in height from 10cm to over 1m and the flowers encompass the whole colour spectrum. The most striking feature of the aquilegia flower is the way that each of its five petals has developed into a spur that contains nectar. The size and shape of the spurs varies greatly, giving a wide range of flower shapes.

A. longissima, from the southern states of the USA, has spurs that are up to 12cm long, with the result that the flowers look like a bright-yellow comet shooting through the garden. The cut-flower industry has used it to develop lots of long-spurred hybrids. These look impressive in bouquets but do not stand up well to the rigours of life in the garden and tend to be short-lived. As its name suggests, *A. canadensis* grows further north in the continent. It has soft yellow and red flowers and was introduced to Britain at the end of the 17th century ▷

AQUILEGIA CHRYSANTHA

A species found in the coniferous forests in New Mexico and Arizona, it has swept-back pale yellow flowers and glaucous foliage. On warm days the flowers are delicately scented. It varies in height between 60cm and 90cm. USDA 3a-8b*

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ by plant hunter John Tradescant. The most widely-grown Asian species is *A. viridiflora* (below right), which is often marketed as *A. 'Chocolate Soldier'*. The flowers have chocolate-coloured petals that are surrounded by olive-green sepals. What really sets it apart is the spicy perfume the flowers pump out on warm days. It is easily swamped in the garden so grow it in a raised bed or terracotta pans.

Enjoying similar conditions is *A. flabellata*, a low-growing compact plant, about 20cm tall, with dainty powder-blue and white flowers. Although now rare in the wild, *A. flabellata* is native to central Japan. A particularly beautiful form (and my own favourite aquilegia) is *A. flabellata* var. *pumila* f. *alba* (page 82). It has a mound of glaucous foliage and a smothering of small white flowers. It used to be called *A. flabellata* 'Nana Alba' and still goes by that name in most nurseries.

In Europe the azure blue flowers of *A. alpina* (page 81) light up alpine meadows. The Alps are also home to the dark, almost black, flowers of *A. atrata* (right). The most widespread European species is *A. vulgaris* and the ease with which it cross-pollinates has led to hundreds of cultivars and hybrids.

Named last century for Charles Darwin's granddaughter, *A. vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Nora Barlow' (page 79), has been around since the 17th century. The flowers are a ball of tightly packed pink and white petals that have a green tinge. Several seed strains have been produced that have the same flower shape. Some hybrids, such as *A. 'Flamboyant'* (above right), have such a density of petals that they create a pompom shape.

The ease with which the genus cross-pollinates has produced an immense variety of flower colour and shape, but this has come at the cost of stability. Although there are some seed strains that produce offspring that are roughly similar to their parents, most progeny will be different. Named cultivars can vary widely, so don't expect uniformity in aquilegias. Grow them not for their regularity but for their wild diversity. Look again at Rachel Ruysch's painting. Her flowers are white, tinged with green or washed with blue: each one different; each one as beautiful as the next. □

• John's pick of aquilegias continues over the next six pages



AQUILEGIA 'FLAMBOYANT'

Selected and named by Aquilegia National Collection Holder, Carrie Thomas, the flowers consist of at least five rows of furled petals that form a dense pompom. The petals are white, deepening to soft pink at the spurs and are sweetly scented. USDA 3a-8b.



A. VULGARIS 'GOLDEN GUINNESS'

A popular hybrid named *A. vulgaris* 'William Guinness' has eye-catching dark-purple and white flowers. A seedling with bright-yellow leaves found growing amongst a group of the plant was isolated and named *A. 'Golden Guinness'*. The foliage is brightest in full sun. Height 75cm.



A. VIRIDIFLORA

A demure and elegant plant that is atypical of the usually extravagant flowers of the genus. It thrives on well-drained soils in places where it is not competing with other plants. Grows to 25cm tall. USDA 3b-9a.



A. ATRATA

Found in the wild growing in low-lying damp Alpine meadows, this species prefers rich, moist soil. The dark colouring of its almost black flowers can be seen in many hybrids. The widely-branching stems grow to about 60cm tall.



**A. VULGARIS VAR.
STELLATA 'NORA BARLOW'**

The tight buds are apple green and this colour stays on the tip of the petals as the flower opens into a ball of pink and white flowers. This is a very old cultivar that was named by Alan Bloom in the 1960s. One of the few aquilegias that lasts as a cut flower. Height 80cm. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 3b-10a.

**AQUILEGIA VULGARIS VAR.
STELLATA 'BLACK BARLOW'**

The Barlow series of aquilegia are a group of stable seed strains that have the same spurless pom-pom shaped flowers as *A. vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Nora Barlow'. The plants have tall, strong branching stems that have three to five flowers at the top. Height 80cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.



A. ALPINA

As its name suggests, a species that is native to the Alps. It grows at higher altitudes and in drier situations than *A. atrata*. It is a compact plant, about 30cm tall with large flowers, at least 5cm wide. The tips of the petals are gently curled outwards.



A. VULGARIS (VERVAENEANA GROUP) 'WOODSIDE BLUE'

The gold and green marbled foliage sets this apart. Introduced by Marvin Feesey from Devon in the 1980s, this was the first stable seed strain with marbled foliage. Not as floriferous as other aquilegias, its admirers grow it for its unusual foliage. Height 45cm. USDA 3a-8b.



A. VULGARIS VAR. STELLATA 'BLUE BARLOW'

Another of the Barlow series that flowers in the second year after sowing seed. These inky-blue flowers do not stand up to wind, so should be grown in a sheltered spot. Not long-lived but will usually seed itself around. Height 80cm. USDA 3a-8b.



A. VULGARIS 'ADELAIDE ADDISON'

An old cultivar with double flowers that have dark blue outer petals and white and blue inner ones. It is raised from seed and the flowers are variable. The flower shape tends to remain with the degree of blueness changing. All forms are beautiful. Height 75cm.

Cultivation

- The north American species such as *A. canadensis*, *A. chrysantha*, *A. coerulea* and *A. longissima* grow best in deep, rich soil that does not dry out. The alpine species, *A. alpina* and *A. atrata*, prefer a more free-draining soil. All do best in dappled shade. However, aquilegias are very tough plants that adapt quickly to their growing conditions and will even grow in poor soil in full sun. Some of the tall forms of *Aquilegia* can blow over in even gentle winds, so may need to be staked. Put the stakes in early on in the season so that the foliage has a chance to cover them up.

- Aquilegias are prolific self-seeders and if you are growing several cultivars in the garden the progeny may not be the colour or size that you want. To avoid unwanted guests cut down the flower stems before they set seed.

- Be wary of named cultivars. These will probably be seed-raised and may not be what you are expecting. Gertrude Jekyll wrote enthusiastically about a white-flowered form with grey-green foliage and flower stems about 90cm tall. You can find it in nurseries as *A. vulgaris* 'Nivea' but plants for sale vary in height and foliage colour. This doesn't matter if what attracts you are the white flowers, but if you were hoping for tall spires and get a 30cm-high mound, you may be disappointed.

Where to see

NATIONAL COLLECTION

- **Touchwood Plants,**
4, Clyne Valley Cottages, Killay,
Swansea SA2 7DU.
Tel 01792 522443,
www.touchwoodplants.co.uk

Where to buy

SEED

- **Chiltern Seeds,**
Crowmarsh Battle Barns,
114 Preston Crowmarsh,
Wallingford OX10 6SL.
Tel 01491 824675,
www.chilternseeds.co.uk
- **Plant World Seeds,**
St. Marychurch Road,
Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4SE.
Tel 01803 872939,
www.plant-world-seeds.com
- **Secret Seeds,**
39 Lawford Mews,
Waterloo Road, Bristol BS2 0PN.
Tel 07870 389889,
www.secretseeds.com
- **Touchwood Plants,**
details as above.
www.touchwoodplants.co.uk

PLANTS

- **The Beth Chatto Gardens,**
Elmstead Market,
Colchester CO7 7DB.
Tel 01206 822007,
www.bethchattoshop.co.uk
- **Kevock Garden Plants,**
16 Kevock Road, Lasswade,
Midlothian EH18 1HT.
Tel 0131 454 0660,
www.kevockgarden.co.uk
- **Long Acre Plants,**
Charlton Musgrove,
Somerset BA9 8EX.
Tel 01963 32802,
www.plantsforshade.co.uk

With thanks to Carrie Thomas at Touchwood Cottage Garden, where this feature was shot.



AQUILEGIA BIEDERMEIER GROUP

The Biedermeier group of aquilegias is a seed mix of compact plants with white, pink or purple flowers. The flowers are often upward-facing. They are short-lived perennials which because of their stature, about 30cm tall, are best suited to raised beds on containers. USDA 3a-9b.



A. COERULEA

Native to the Rocky Mountains from Montana to New Mexico. In the wild the flowers are variable in colour from pale blue, white and pale yellow. This is the cream and white version. Typically, the flowers are bi-coloured with the petals a different colour from the tepals. Height 50cm.



A. FLABELLATA VAR. PUMILA F. ALBA

A charming and irresistible form, combining all the best qualities of the genus. The white tubular flowers are held clear above the glaucous foliage. The tips of the petals are tinged with a green hue. A compact plant that grows to about 15cm tall.



A. CHRYSANTHA X FRAGRANS

Aquilegia hybridise with abandon. This beautiful seedling, from National Collection holder Carrie Thomas, is the result of a liaison between *A. chrysantha* and *A. fragrans*. It has the charm of both parents and has inherited scented flowers from *A. fragrans*.



A. VULGARIS VAR. STELLATA

The stellata forms of *Aquilegia vulgaris* are often referred to as 'clematis flowered aquilegia'. The spurless petals appear to have been flattened, giving the flowers a rounded shape. The colour of the flowers varies but pinks and whites dominate. Usually about 70cm tall.

Mark Straver

This expert supplier has gathered a host of loyal designers who admire his pursuit of plant perfection

WORDS JODIE JONES PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

There are no gold medals for providing perfect plants for Chelsea show gardens but, if there were, Mark Straver would have a shelf full. For the last 13 years, he has been supplying specimens to the very best designers in this country, both for their show gardens and their private clients.

“Really I run a personal shopping service for landscapers,” Mark says. “Although for show gardens I am part plantsman, part psychiatrist. When you meet a new designer at Heathrow at 4am to source plants for their first Chelsea, you know you are going to go to hell and back with them over the next nine months.” And like all relationships forged in adversity, they tend to last. Tom Stuart-Smith’s 2001 garden was the first Mark collaborated on at Chelsea, and they have worked together every year since. Other clients include Cleve West and Jinny Blom. They know he can help them to win gold. As Jinny says, “I have a troublesome passion for everything to be as good as it can be. When I met Mark, I realised I had met my match.”

Certainly to say Mark is driven would be an understatement. He set up his first nursery business when he was 19 and for most of the last 25 years he has worked seven days a week. Yet until he was 16 he had a privileged public school upbringing, reared game birds in his bedroom for fun and spent his free time salmon fishing and shooting.

This charmed existence was funded by his grandfather’s successful commercial nursery. “Not that I ever went anywhere near it,” says Mark. “I really wasn’t interested in gardening at that stage.” But everything changed when Mark was 16. His grandfather died, leaving the family with a crippling inheritance tax bill. “I was hoiked out of Wellington College and sent to the local tech. I lasted a fortnight, then decided to jack it in and earn some money.” He worked for his father at the nursery, learning his plants by taking thousands of cuttings of one shrub after another. “I’ve never had any formal training, but you can learn a lot on the job like that.”

Then, at the age of 19 he begged a bit of spare land from his father, spent his savings on paving slabs, and set up a retail plant centre of his own. “My idea was to grow the plants on for a season longer than usual, so my shrubs were bigger than you could normally buy.” And if anyone ever asked for heathers, or something else he didn’t grow, he would source them elsewhere. “Never say no. That’s the key.”

Mark’s business thrived, but it was a constant battle, paying back the banks. And in a sense he has been fighting ever since. He set up another nursery as he needed more land to expand, developed a deep loathing of bankers, and successfully sold on that business in 1998, when he was just 32 years old. “But it happened so fast. I suddenly found myself with nothing to do.”

In a radical departure, he spent six months learning to be a personal trainer. “I picked up some great clients, several of whom are still friends, but gradually I realised I was missing plants.” Then he saw an ad for a senior vacancy at a new internet business called Crocus. “I had 12 good years there. The business was growing so fast we were flat out all the time and I just got on with my bit of it – providing the best plants to the best designers at Chelsea, and everywhere else. But people kept asking why I wasn’t doing it for my own business. Then one day I realised I wanted one more roll of the dice.”

This time he joined forces with old friend Robin Wallis, who also comes from a long line of nurserymen. They got financial backing from two of Mark’s former personal training clients, called in favours from all the nurseries they’d worked with over the years, and Hortus Loci opened for business. Within days, Cleve West, Andy Sturgeon, Thomas Hoblyn and Joe Swift had booked them to provide plants for their Chelsea 2012 show gardens.

“This business is all about relationships,” says Mark. “The relationship I build with each designer is crucial, but so are the relationships with specialist nurserymen around the world. I make sure I know who is growing the very best olives, or buxus, or whatever it is people need.”

And he won’t be taking life easier any time soon. Alongside Hortus Loci, Mark and Robin opened a stylish retail nursery this Easter – Whitewater Nursery, and will soon unveil an innovative new venture which Mark describes as “a sort of upmarket cash and carry”, aimed at smaller scale designers who couldn’t normally afford to import the premium plants that he is renowned for sourcing. “For me it is always about the plants,” says Mark. “I want to give people the chance to buy only the best.”

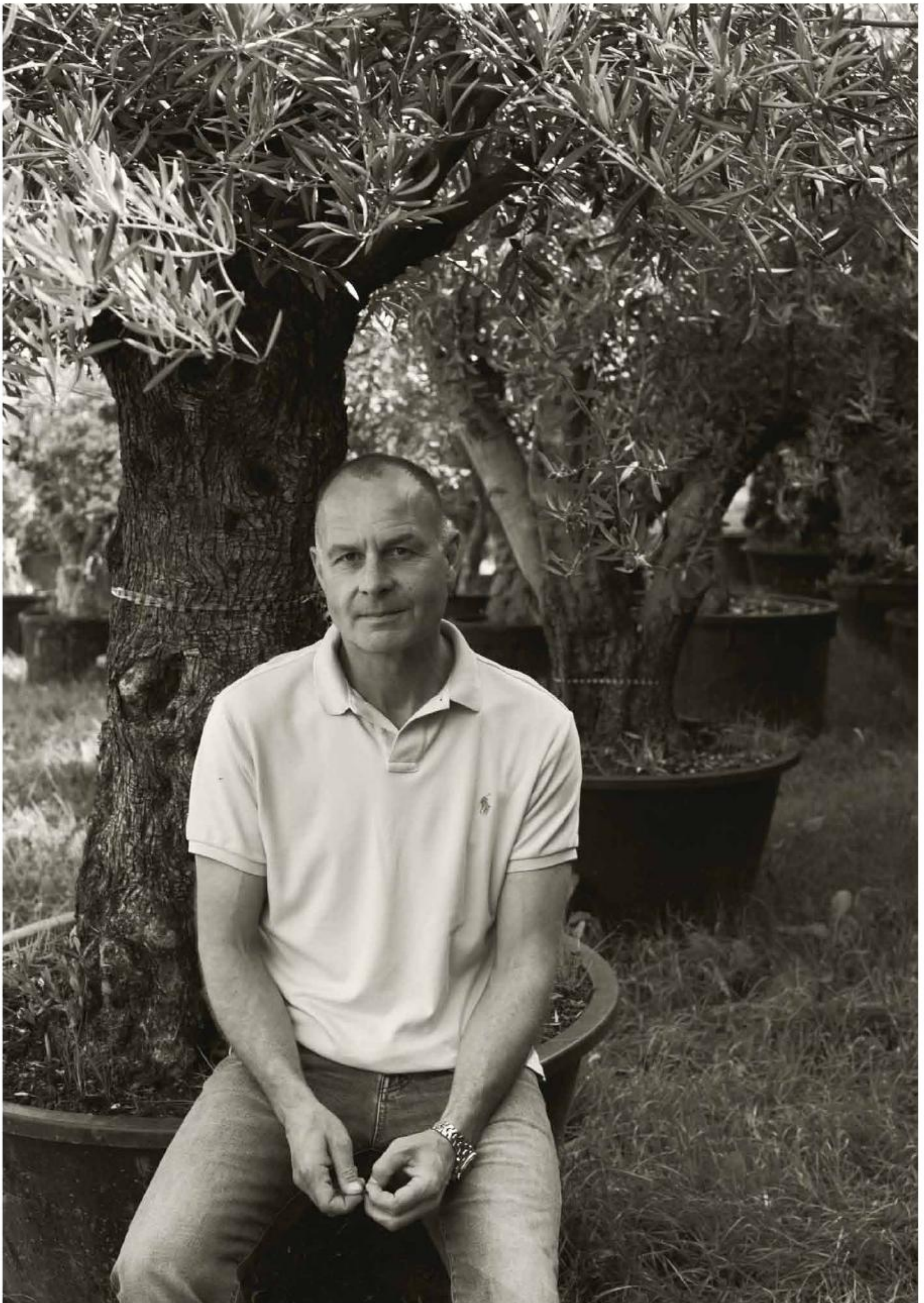
USEFUL INFORMATION

Tel 0118 932 6495, www.hortusloci.co.uk.

Tel 0118 932 6487, www.whitewaternursery.co.uk.

NEXT MONTH John Carter of Rowden Gardens

“For me it is always about the plants... I want to give people the chance to buy only the best”





Little House, big heart

This one-acre garden at Little House packs a huge amount of interest into its limited space

WORDS MARY KEEN PHOTOGRAPHS LYNN KEDDIE

Cotswolds garden

The formal potager with brick paths is a signature feature of Rosemary Verey's gardens.

In brief

Name Little House.

What Formal village garden.

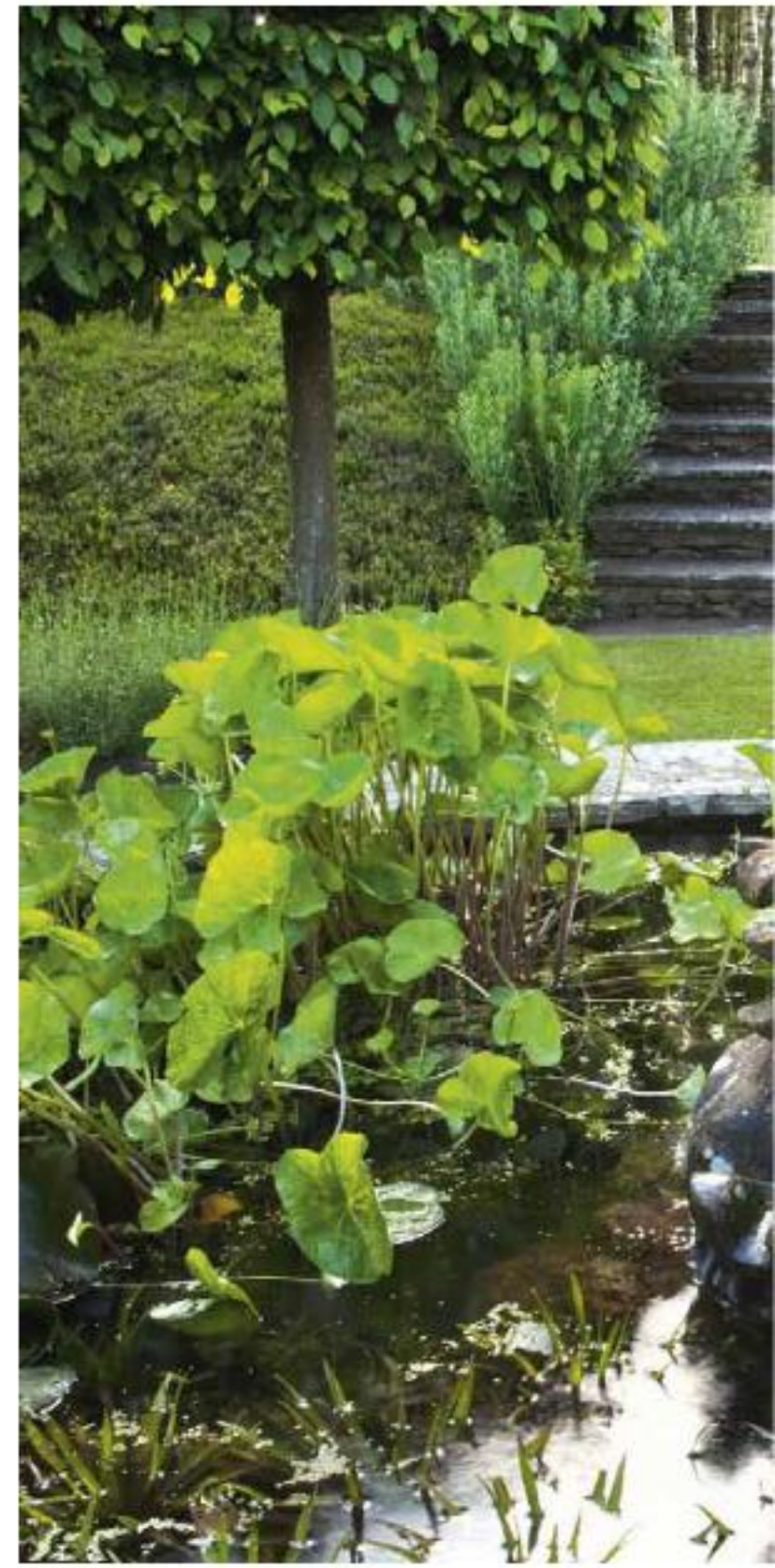
Where The Cotswolds, 3 miles from Cirencester.

Climate The site is sheltered in the lee of the hill.

Size Just over an acre.

Soil Well cultivated, alkaline but not stony.

Points of interest Designed by Rosemary Verey. At its best in May.





The village of Barnsley in the Cotswolds was where the late Rosemary Verey made her famous garden at Barnsley House. In the 1970s and 1980s you could not open a magazine or garden book without some mention of the woman who designed gardens for the Prince of Wales and Elton John. Since gardeners went native, her formal historic style has been out of fashion, but a perfect example of her work has stood the test of time, just across the road from Barnsley House, which is now a hotel.

The garden surrounding Little House was somewhat overgrown, but the bones of a formal layout were still visible when Paul and Yvonne Bennetts first saw the place. The owners of six acres in North Devon, they had always wanted to return to the Cotswolds where Yvonne grew up. Looking across the growth to a view of the village church and stone-roof cottages, they fell in love with what they saw and after seven years there is no sign of the honeymoon being over. “We think we’re so lucky,” they say, over and over again. Before they moved in, Yvonne a retired teacher, was methodical in her research. Knowing about the

Rosemary Verey connection with Barnsley, she was keen to learn about her style of planting, which was so perfect for the Cotswolds. The day she bought *Rosemary Verey’s Garden Plans* she opened it to find pictures of somewhere that looked vaguely familiar. She called Paul over and said “This looks like the garden we’ve just bought.” Since then the Bennetts’ efforts have been directed at restoring the place that Verey designed in the 1980s.

Thematic variation

Although the restoration of Verey’s design has been their first aim, the Bennetts have introduced plenty of variations on her themes. The area between the high beech hedge that flanks the busy road through the village and the front of the house is narrow and the greedy roots of the tall hedge are not an encouragement to plants. Originally Verey specified a permanent groundcover of *Waldsteinia ternata* between clipped balls of box that flank the path. The box looks immaculate with no sign of the disease that has plagued so many, and some of the evergreen wall shrubs chosen over a ▷



Key Verey elements

Pleached trees, which need not be restricted to lime or hornbeam. Mrs Verey liked to add *Fritillaria imperialis* around the trunks.

Vegetables grown potager fashion with separate beds lined with brick paths are easy to work and decorative, but you do need a constant supply of crops to keep the beds full.

Fruit tunnels with different apples on each arch – but make sure there are enough that blossom at similar periods to encourage pollination. ‘Ashmead’s Kernel’ was one of her favourites and is still among the best dessert apples to grow.

Box parterres, although the advent of box disease has made this a much less dependable feature. Try *Teucrium x lucidrys*, (or *Ilex crenata* for acid soils) instead.

Soft colours. There is still a lot to be said for the misty blues and mauves that Verey loved. Purple alliums and campanulas were signature plants. *Scabiosa* ‘Butterfly Blue’ and *Phlox paniculata* ‘Blue Paradise’ with white valerian would provide a longer flowering season.

Top left The herbaceous border where delphiniums dominate with blue aquilegias and white peonies. It’s an area where the Bennetts are planning to add interest for later in the season.

Top right Sea horse pool, designed by Simon Verity, who often worked with Rosemary Verey.

Bottom left The box walk to the north of the house has a more varied ground cover than the *Waldsteinia ternata* specified by Rosemary Verey.

Bottom right Among the loose planting of the potager a clematis is trained to an iron support.



Rosemary Verey

Rosemary Verey was born in 1918 and died in 2001. She was an entirely self-taught designer whose style was nostalgic and ladylike. She wore pearls and a cotton dress to greet visitors and to work in the garden and she became all the rage in the USA. The book she wrote about her own garden, *Rosemary Verey's Making of a Garden*, was the most successful.

Gardens to visit designed by Rosemary Verey

Barnsley House Always open to guests at the hotel and also has a garden club membership for £25 a year. The garden is open as part of the Barnsley Festival on 18 May (www.barnsleyvillage.co.uk). Also for the National Gardens Scheme on 13 August, 12.30-4.30pm. Barnsley House, Barnsley, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5EE. Tel 01285 740 000, www.barnsleyhouse.com

Lime Close This 3-acre mature plantsman's garden has a herb garden designed by Rosemary Verey. Visitors also welcome by appointment February to June. 35 Henleys Lane, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4HU. Email MC de Lauberede at mail@mcgardenesdesign.com



▷ quarter of a century ago still survive. *Pyracantha atalantioides*, *Itea ilicifolia*, *Magnolia grandiflora* and *Cytisus battandieri* jostle for space with cottage favourites honeysuckle and roses, but the ground cover is more varied now, with hardy cranesbills, alstroemerias and parahebe. At the end of the vista to the south west there is a beckoning statue and there are more stone figures of the four seasons tucked in under the high hedge where very little will grow. The Bennetts have collected a number of garden sculptures, and huge pots are positioned in other key places, inspired by how pots are used at Great Dixter, which is one of Paul and Yvonne's favourite gardens.

Simple layout

The box parterre to the west of the house is at its best in May, and the layout is simple. Four squares of box divided by diagonals are planted with colour for later in the year. *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' has been a big success and other sections are filled with *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead' or the silver curry plant *Helichrysum italicum*. Yvonne wants to see how *Brunnera macrophylla* will do, as she likes the shape

of its large leaves for its contrast to other plants. In Verey's day it was all dianthus and violas, which needed constant renewal.

On the higher level of the garden there is another parterre – the potager edged with brick paths with standard mophead trees of clipped golden privet and plenty of lime green *Alchemilla mollis* among herbs and blue flowers. Yvonne loves it.

The Bennetts have added to the house by creating a very attractive link building, which provides a garden room. Their standards are high and they enjoy opening the garden for the Barnsley festival every year in May. They have plans to improve the mixed border on the lawn, which looks good from spring to July, but needs more colour and texture. They also plan to further develop a wild flower area in the paddock. Mrs Verey's clever design, improved by the unstinting labours of her biggest fans, offers far more than you would have imagined possible in just an acre of garden. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Website www.barnsleyvillage.co.uk

Open The garden at the Little House will be open on 18 May during the Barnsley Festival.

Top left The attractive, self-seeding opium poppies and long-flowering valerian fill the beds in this part of the potager.

Top right The outer edges of the seahorse pool, and in the background the beginning of a striking white peony border.

Bottom left The parterre, with pleached *Sorbus aria* 'Lutescens' and box interplanted with *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna'.

Bottom right The potager with *Ligustrum ovalifolium* 'Aureum' underplanted with alchemilla, *Helichrysum italicum*, digitalis and lavender.



In brief

Name Manor Farm.

What Privately owned garden around a 17th-century manor once owned by Enid Blyton.

Where Stourton Caundle, in the Blackmore Vale area of north Dorset.

Size 1½ acres

Climate Usually warm summers and mild winters, although the garden has been hit by harsh winters in the last three years.

Soil Heavy Dorset stone brash.

Points of interest Cottage-garden style planting around a pergola walk, with mature trees, vegetable gardens and large ponds.

The heady planting either side of the pergola sets the tone for the rest of the garden.

Left top Purple *Iris siberica* pairs with *Thermopsis rhombifolia* subsp. *montana*.

Left middle *Euonymus* lines a path.

Left bottom *Aquilegia*s self-seed in the garden and are a dominant May feature.

Dorset garden

Triumph of imagination

A property once owned by Enid Blyton is now a
gorgeous example of carefully crafted abundance

WORDS SUSAN ELDERKIN PHOTOGRAPHS ABIGAIL REX





“Though Enid Blyton never lived at the property, it is thought to be the setting for *Five on Finniston Farm*”

Sue Simon looks out over her vegetable patch where hostas and *Iris sibirica* share beds with gooseberries and artichokes, and the white heads of *Allium stipitatum* ‘Mount Everest’ pop up from behind the rhubarb. “That’s how I like it: a muddle,” she says. Unpretentious and joyful, the muddle approach is one that works well in rural Dorset. This is a garden where forget-me-nots, foxgloves and cow parsley are as intrinsic to the overall effect as any nursery-bought plant, and if ever a garden said ‘17th-century Dorset farmhouse’, this is it.

Which is ironic because Sue Simon herself is an exotic. Born in New Zealand, she was brought up in Fiji where it was “all avocados, Swiss cheese plants, ginger and gerberas”. She came to England in 1975 and married Oliver, who had already taken on Manor Farm in Stourton Caundle as a working arable and dairy farm, having bought it from the Enid Blyton estate in 1962. (Though the children’s author never lived at the property, it is thought to be the setting for *Five on Finniston Farm*.) Sue immediately set about her English gardening education. “I learnt by visiting other gardens,” she says simply. “I soon picked things up. I just settled here like a little lamb.”

Nearly 40 years later, the trees planted by Oliver – including three lovely weeping willows by the stream, plus weeping kinds of silver birch, lime and ash – have reached maturity, and the pergola, also put in by Oliver, is only just holding up

under the weight of a wisteria and a rambling *Rosa* ‘Veilchenblau’. The garden has seen their three children grow; the youngest, Vanessa, has gone into a gardening career herself. Sue now describes herself as the plantswoman of the pair (“I buy plants, and then I have to find somewhere to put them”) while Oliver sees to the overall design. “He loves going round a corner and seeing things,” she says. Their gardener Sid, now full-time, has been with them over 40 years.

Garden showpiece

The pergola walk with its wide herbaceous borders is the centrepiece of the garden, and this is where Sue’s planting style, self-described as “chaotic and billowy, with everything all over the place”, is shown off to greatest effect. By late May the borders are a mass of purples, blues, pinks and whites, as the thistle-like centaurea, aquilegias, pink lupins and old-fashioned peonies run amok with perennial forget-me-not and a haze of fennel. *Alchemilla mollis* and *Geranium phaeum* line the edges. By late summer the soft palette and billowy shapes give way to more vibrant shots of colour and definitive shapes as Michaelmas daisies and dahlias come to the fore. One of her inspirations for these borders was Le Jardin Plume in France, where the perennials and grasses reach head height by late summer.

A gardener who “lets things happen”, she is often delighted by accidental pairings. She points out a great ▸

1 Fennel meets *Viburnum opulus* ‘Roseum’ over the top of a wall to one side of the pergola.

2 *Geranium* ‘Johnson’s Blue’.

3 The stream is lined here with hostas and overarched by mature weeping willows.

4 White aquilegias, self-sown.

5 *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Argenteo-variegata’ at the front door in different shapes – the formal notes in this garden are not too formal.

6 A saddle stone stands sentry in the herb bed, with wild euphorbia and chives growing at its base, and lovage billowing behind.

7 A sheltered eating terrace is bordered by an acer (that has since died) and a berberis.



A gate marks the entrance to the pergola walk.

“No garden, Dorset or other, can achieve that loose, unbuttoned effect without someone being in control”

▷ wedge of the yellow-flowered *Phlomis fruticosa* with the peachy-pink *Rosa* ‘Frühlingsmorgen’ spiralling out of it. “I think they work so well together. Vanessa says to me, ‘Take all that out, Mum’. But I tell her to keep quiet.” She admits she should do more to keep the perennials in check – “That one’s a thug and will take over”, she says, whacking a clump of *Cephalaria gigantea* with her stick. “Every summer I say, ‘Let’s pull some out’. But by September it looks lovely.”

Personal favourites

Her favourite area is the walled garden edging the road where an ancient espaliered pear clings to the house, and a *Clematis montana* drapes with such heavy abundance that its host, an *Osmanthus*, is completely hidden in May. Formal notes are added by balls of box and euonymus, not too tightly clipped, and urns and saddle stones, all of which allow Sue to give full reign to her tendency to leave well alone. “It told me in *The Telegraph* to thin those clouds of honesty, but I don’t like to,” she says.

The garden runs up to the adjacent farmed fields, and to blur the line between the two they’ve planted a ‘round’ of trees

encircled by a fence in one field. On another boundary, the planting around three large ponds moves gradually from garden plants to native woodland: bamboo, gunnera and a cornus around the first, willows draping their leaves into the second, and dense beech and chestnut woods further in. Cow parsley is left to reach great heights on the banks. “Sid’s dying to cut that out but I say, ‘No, we’re having it.’ These are supposed to be wild areas, after all.”

And so she reveals the strong personality behind the so-called muddle. For no garden, Dorset or other, can achieve that loose, unbuttoned effect without someone being in control. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Manor Farm, Stourton Caundle, Dorset DT10 2JW.

Contact Oliver and Sue Simon.

Tel 01963 362471.

Email olandsve.simon@googlemail.com

Open Groups welcome by appointment. Admission £4, children free.

9 of Oliver and Sue’s favourite plants

1 *Nectaroscordum siculum*

subsp. *bulgaricum*

We love all the allium species – the blues, the purples, the whites. This year we have some of the allium relative *N. s. subsp. bulgaricum* with little pale drooping bells that are gorgeous. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b[†].

2 *Viburnum opulus* ‘Roseum’

This is a great favourite in May with its huge pompoms that start lime green then go to white. I love it when it’s fresh and new. It’s wonderful for picking and goes on for ages. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Centaurea montana*

A lovely strong blue. We’ve got it everywhere in the beds. RHS H4.

4 *Iris sibirica*

I love them for their height and colour. They’re not fussy where they grow – yes they like water, but look at them in the herbaceous borders.

5 *Clematis montana*

I love *montana*. We have it on the bridge over the stream, and also in the walled garden. I love the way clematis not only climbs up trees but clambers through them.

6 *Viburnum plicatum* ‘Grandiflorum’

We use this to mark the edge of a path, with shrubs around and trees behind it. RHS H4.

7 *Hostas*

I like to plant a selection. The silvery ones seem to get ignored by slugs. We use them in pots and by the stream.

8 *Philadelphus coronarius* ‘Aureus’

This has a yellowy leaf and white, highly perfumed flowers. I love it for its perfume, and its colour. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9a.

9 *Phlomis fruticosa*

This is a tremendous plant. It’s great in winter too as it has good seedheads. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-11.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.





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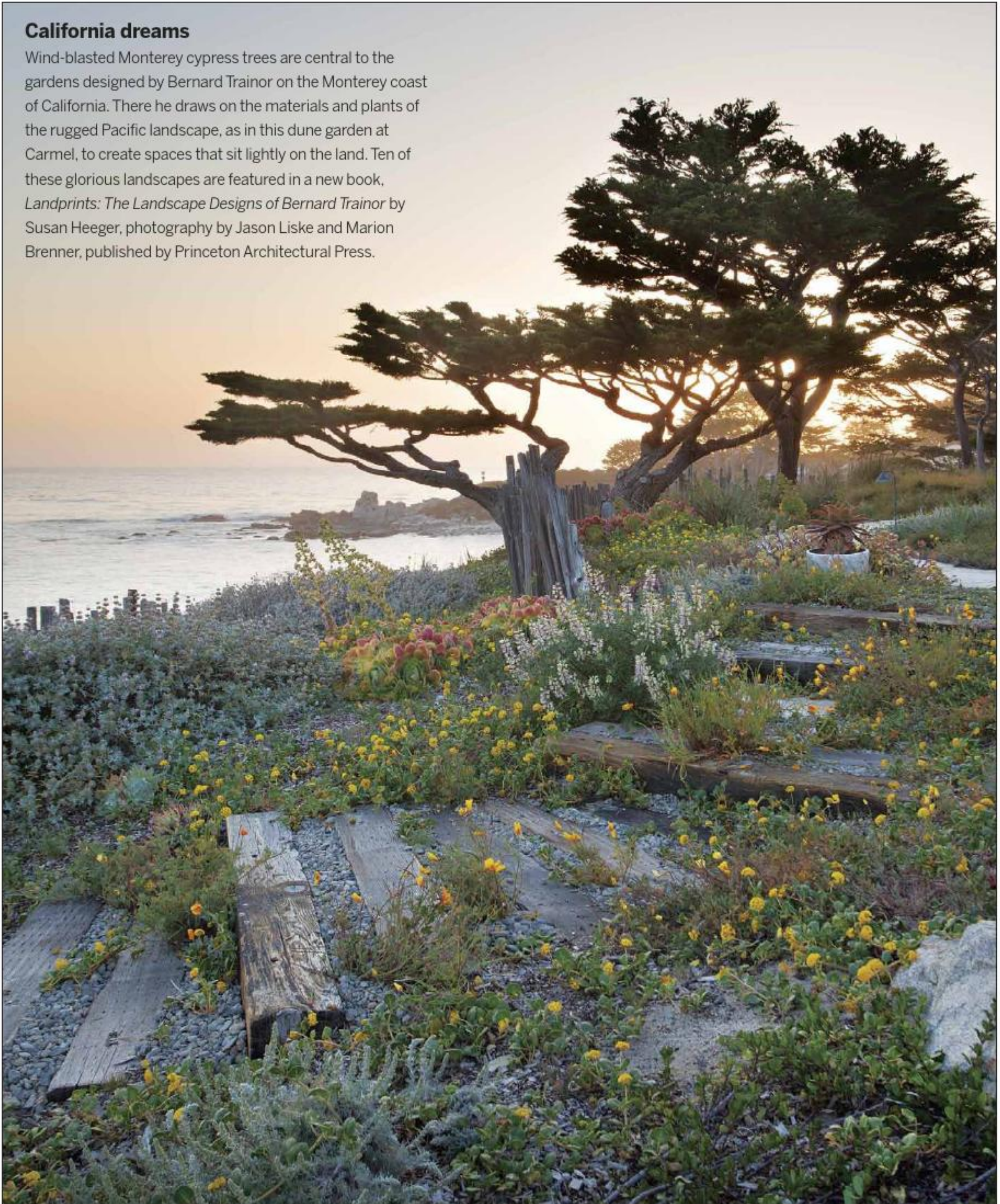


design

Latest design news, design sourcebook

California dreams

Wind-blasted Monterey cypress trees are central to the gardens designed by Bernard Trainor on the Monterey coast of California. There he draws on the materials and plants of the rugged Pacific landscape, as in this dune garden at Carmel, to create spaces that sit lightly on the land. Ten of these glorious landscapes are featured in a new book, *Landprints: The Landscape Designs of Bernard Trainor* by Susan Heeger, photography by Jason Liske and Marion Brenner, published by Princeton Architectural Press.



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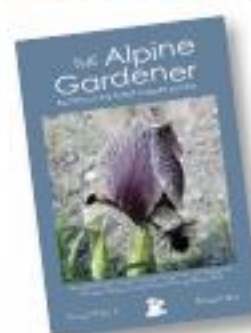


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News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



REGENERATION

Office space

Grosvenor Gardens, two triangular gardens in the heart of Belgravia used by residents and office workers, is to receive £1 million from property developer

Oakvest for their regeneration, which will add mature native trees and native flowers, a new fountain and lighting to the popular green space. The statue of

Marshal Foch and the Rifle Brigade Memorial will be restored. It is expected that the gardens, which will be managed by Oakvest, will reopen in spring 2015.

AMERICAN STYLE

This elegant two-seater garden bench is a new addition to the Buie collection of handmade powder-coated aluminium furniture by American company McKinnon and Harris. The design draws on a high style American Federal chair, attributed to John and Thomas Seymour, and a George Hepplewhite design. Shown here in Shenandoah Grey Green, the bench can be used with or without a cushion.



116cm long, 94cm high, 63cm deep. £7308. 12-16 weeks to make. Order from McKinnon and Harris UK showroom, Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, London SW10 OXE. Tel 020 7349 9085.



SCULPTURE

New exhibition

An exhibition of sculpture carved from stone opens at The Garden Gallery in Broughton, Hants, this month. Works by new exhibitors to the gallery include Assyrian in Cumbrian green slate by Alyosha Moeran, 6 Fish in Lepine by Mark Guest, and Slight Brown Point in Ancaster Weatherbed by Guy Stevens. The gallery is taking part in the Chelsea Fringe which runs from 18 May to 9 June. The Sculpted Stone, 16 May-20 July, Thursday-Saturday 11am-5pm. Tel 01794 301144; www.gardengallery.uk.com



ARCHITECTURE Care home design

Landscape architect Lily Jencks has designed the landscape for the first international Maggie's Centre cancer care home, which opened in Hong Kong in March. The building, designed by Frank Gehry, is a series of pavilions that sit within red-flowered delonix trees and looks out across two pools. There are two intimate garden rooms at the back of the building where visitors can sit under the shade of frangipani (*Plumeria*) trees.



ANNIVERSARY Gardens event

Jardins Jardin, the garden event held in the Tuileries in Paris, celebrates its tenth anniversary this year and the 400th anniversary of André Le Nôtre's birth at the gardens. The theme of this year's event is 'New Perspectives' and some 20 gardens, terraces and balconies will be shown. There will be a garden antiques section, a white rose named for Philippe Starck and a *Paphiopedilum* orchid named for André Le Nôtre. Jardins, Jardin aux Tuileries, 31 May-2 June. www.jardinsjardin.com



FESTIVAL Garden writing

The UK's first Festival of Garden Writing is being hosted by Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith at their home, Barn Garden, in Serge Hill in Hertfordshire. It will explore themes of gardens in biography and autobiography and how Eden and Arcadia fire our imaginations. Speakers include Penelope Hobhouse, Hugh Johnson, Katherine Swift, Lisa Jardine, Diana Athill and Adam Nicolson. The festival is also holding a Garden Writing competition, focused on memoir. The winning entry, of 2,500 words, will win £2,500 and be published by Granta Online. Deadline for entries is 31 May. Festival of Garden Writing, 29 and 30 June, day and weekend tickets available. Tel 020 7401 8865, www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

Notebook

- **Book now for two garden tours** in aid of the gardening charity Perennial. The Arts and Crafts house Rodmarton Manor, nr Cirencester, Gloucs has an 8-acre garden divided into rooms with new topiary and masses of roses; 21 May. Guided tours of the 16th-century moated hall and gardens at Otley, Suffolk, 11 June. Tel 0845 230 1839; www.perennial.org.uk

- **The Spring festival of plants** at the Domaine de Courson, 35km south-west of Paris, runs from 17-19 May. Cassian Schmidt will talk about German prairie planting and there will be several lectures on American gardens. www.domaine-de-courson.fr

- **Book now for a taster day** on garden design by Juliet Sargeant, chair of the Society of Garden Designers, at West Dean College, Sussex, 2 October. Tel 01243 811301; www.westdean.org.uk.

- **A masterclass on garden lighting** with designer Marcus Barnett and lighting expert Sally Storey takes place at John Cullen, King's Road, London on 7 May, 6-7.30pm. £30, book on 020 7371 5400.

- **Troy Scott Smith** has been appointed head gardener at Sissinghurst, Kent, following the retirement of Alexis Datta. He has been head gardener of Bodnant in North Wales since 2006.



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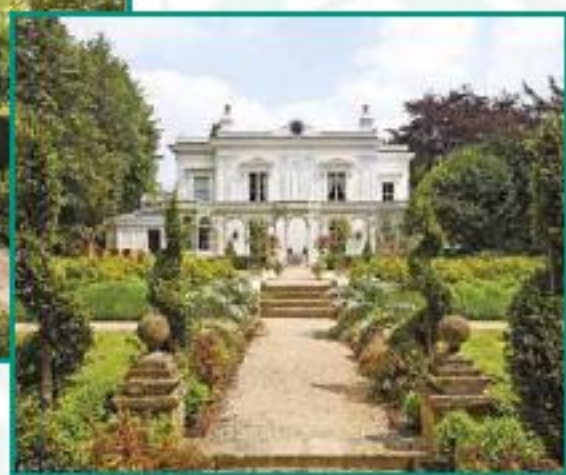
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Rooftop garden patterns in New York by Ken Smith.



Stylish pavilion and pool set amid lush tropical plantings from Raymond Jungles.



Paul Bungay's gardens are defined by strong architectural formality.



How successful are Japanese gardens when seen in other countries?

Australian Landscape Conference, 20-23 September 2013

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This September Melbourne will host the tenth Australian Landscape Conference. Held every two years, the event gathers together a selection of top international gardening names who will talk about their work and discuss their thoughts on trends in landscape design, landscape art and plantsmanship.

All gardeners are welcome, whether professional or enthusiast, with speakers chosen to reflect a diversity of international talent and opinion, coming

from as far as India, Japan and Chile. This year's theme considers what we can learn from the past when designing our landscapes for today.

Additional activities

The conference takes place over a weekend. On the Friday before the conference there is the optional extra of a tour to visit some of the area's most iconic coastal and rural gardens on the Mornington Peninsula to the south east

of Melbourne. There's also a special evening function on the Saturday at Melbourne's Savage Club, giving you the chance to meet the conference speakers in person. Following the conference there will be a day of interactive workshops covering aspects of design and practical horticulture.

Please select any additional activities before attending the conference. There is a range of accommodation available near the venue (see the website for details).

TO REGISTER VISIT www.landscapeconference.com
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Louisa Jones highlights the partnership seen in Mediterranean gardens between humans and their environment.



Juan Grimm's designs often use foliage to great balanced effect.



Ken Smith's revitalised waterfront walkway incorporates inviting seating.



Hardy indigenous plants are key to Aniket Bhagwat's design.

The international selection of speakers include:



Aniket Bhagwat is the Conference's first speaker from India. He heads the innovative and influential firm, Landscape India.



Louisa Jones is a world authority on the gardens and landscapes of the Mediterranean and their continued inspiration.



Anne Latreille is a key Australian garden writer. She has recently completed *Garden Voices*, a study of Australian designers.



Paul Bangay is probably Australia's best known designer. He will speak along with garden photographer **Simon Griffiths**.



Juan Grimm is from Chile and has an international reputation for his composed, distilled and timeless gardens.



Raymond Jungles is a distinguished designer based in Miami. His gardens combine the role of nature with the flair of Burle Marx.



Ken Smith is at the cutting edge of New York design. His art installations and landscapes projects all convey a sense of fun.



As a key authority on the gardens of Japan **Toshio Watanabe** will consider how Japanese gardens transfer from country to country.

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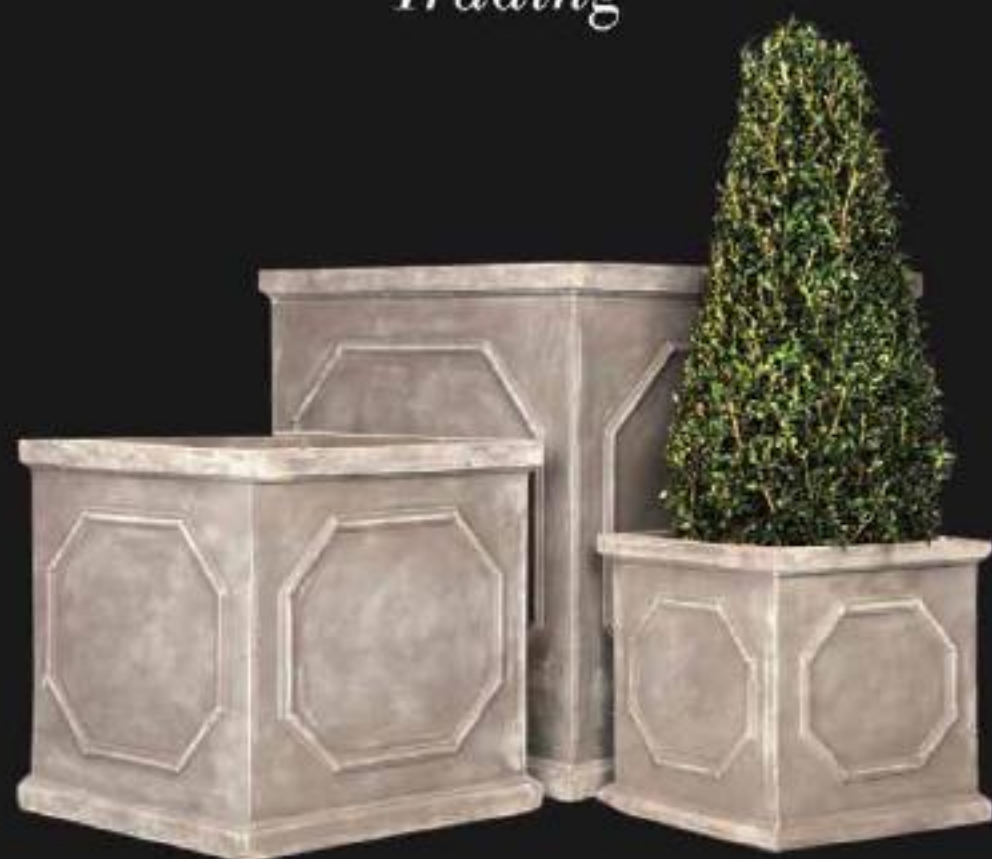


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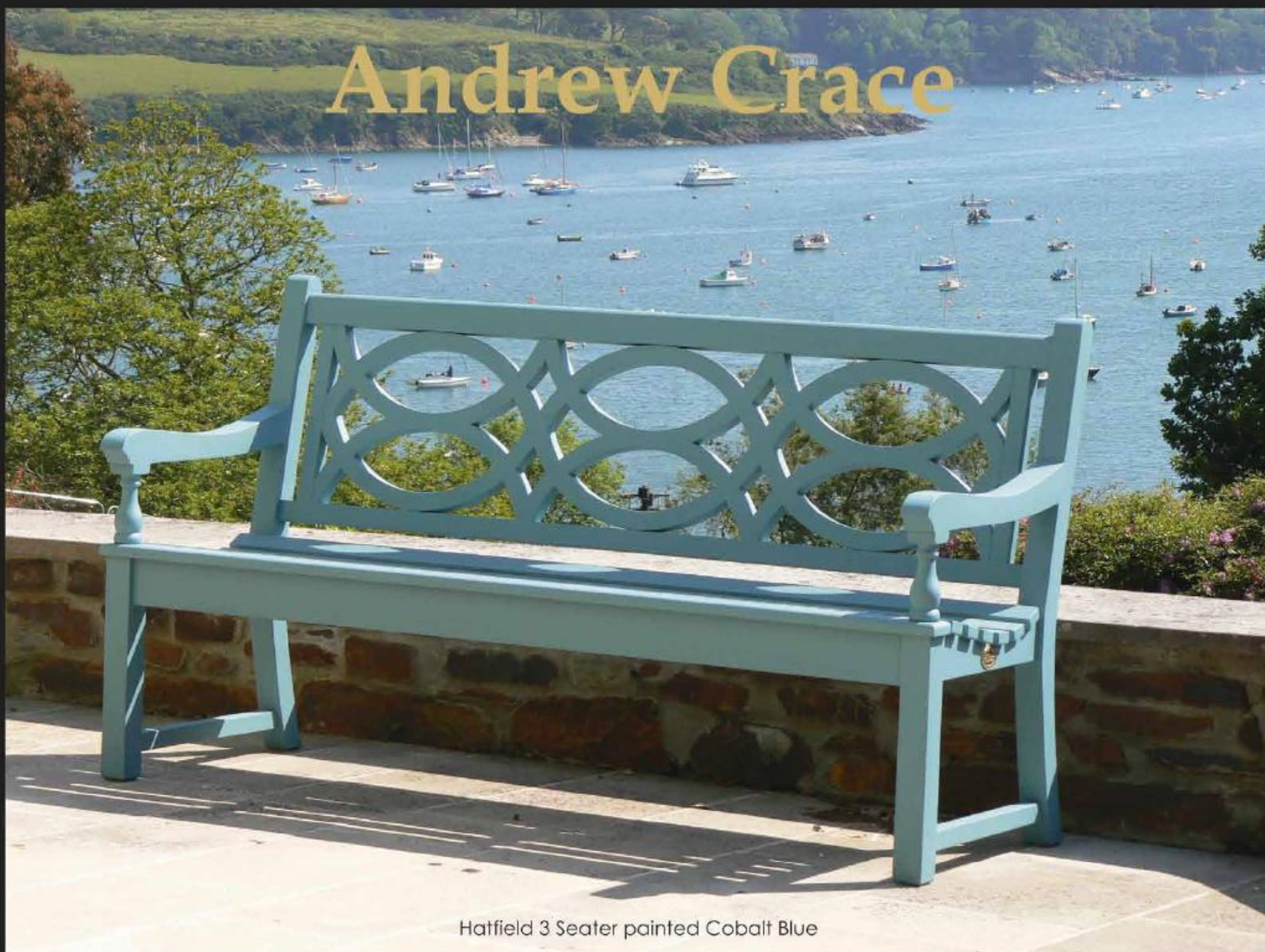
Book reviews, reader letters and crossword



ROY DIBLIK

The secrets of Piet Oudolf's
philosophy are revealed in
Planting: A New Perspective
— reviewed on page 111

Andrew Crace



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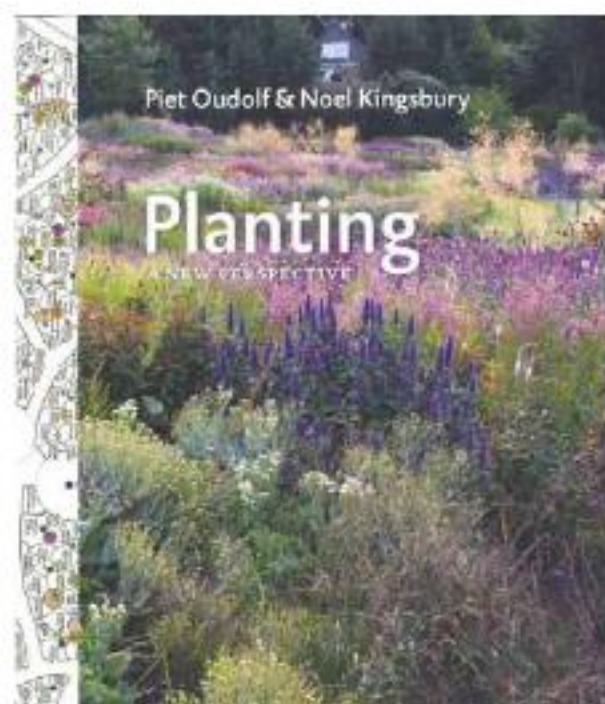
Book reviews

PLANTING: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

by Piet Oudolf and Noël Kingsbury

Timber Press, £30

ISBN 978-1604693706



This excellent book will appeal on a number of different levels. The publishers have lavished a great deal of beautiful photography on the project, enough to draw one lightly from page to page. Even the idly interested might profitably thumb through the book to gain a basic grasp of an important trend in landscape design. But the book carries the authority of two practitioners who have been at the centre of the movement towards naturalistic planting styles over two decades.

Noël Kingsbury's text, engaging and passionate, never shirks the complexity of its subject. It is a long-understood paradox that 'naturalistic' planting is a hugely technical endeavour. The authors' careers are steeped in the fiendish detail of this effort – we should be thankful that they have both the inclination and the ability to communicate their knowledge so freely. A series of plant lists, tables and planting plans support the text with a wealth of technical information and give us a fascinating insight into Piet Oudolf's approach to design. All in all, we are presented



Naturalistic planting schemes counter-intuitively require great technical knowledge.

with an immediately appealing book that will also reward further study and reference.

Where readers may differ from the thesis of this book is in its tendency to characterise previous gardening convention as reliant on rigid planting in blocks, tiered in strict order of height from front to back – gardening as a crude expression of man's hegemony over nature. Did this current impulse to imitate nature arise without antecedence, or would it be fairer to set it in the context of the Robinsonian tradition? The study and imitation of natural plant communities, encouragement of self-sowers, the introduction of exotics to naturalistic planting schemes, embracing spontaneity, the preference for species over

hybrids – all are explicitly present in William Robinson's writing and have not left English gardening since.

Acute concerns over conservation and sustainability combined with advances in the study of plant ecology have lately driven a strong surge towards creating easily maintained, visually striking 'natural' tapestries of plants. The stunning results of this movement are celebrated in this book by two of its foremost proponents – I would thoroughly recommend that you buy it.

Rory Duso is a writer and Kew-trained gardener

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RRP £30. Reader offer price £27.50 including p&p.

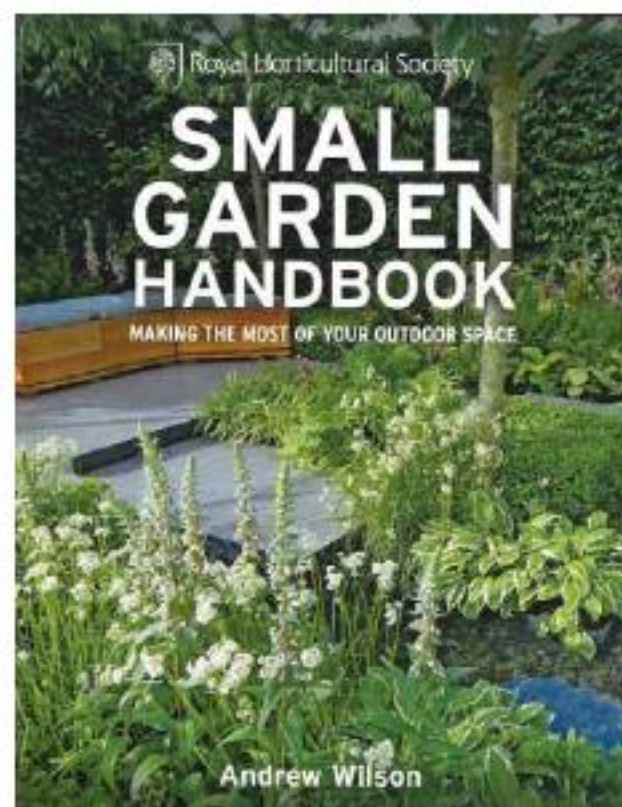
Book reviews

RHS SMALL GARDEN HANDBOOK

by Andrew Wilson

Mitchell Beazley, £20

ISBN 978-1845336813



Given that people's gardens are getting ever smaller, the *RHS Small Garden Handbook* will appeal to a growing audience. Designing small gardens can be quite a different discipline to that of a larger garden and may be more difficult; a smaller space has to earn its keep.

Author Andrew Wilson guides us through the principles of design in eight lavishly illustrated chapters. These are broken down into sub-chapters, which makes the subject very accessible and more digestible; each one starts with a 15-point introduction and finishes with a bona fide case study.

He begins with a comprehensive chapter on the basics – getting a feel for the space and its constituents, such as looking at aspect, orientation and general environment of the site, before introducing the concepts of design and style.

We are then guided through the process of design; how to use space, volume and height effectively and efficiently in order to get the best out of a garden with clever ideas on layout

and geometry. An overview of garden styles from Arts and Crafts to modern minimalist should cater for most people's taste.

The emphasis shifts to the practicalities and various garden conceits. He deals with materials one might use to furnish surfaces in the garden, and an imaginative chapter on boundaries, often forgotten yet so dominant; green walls making a verdant solution if a hedge proves too large. In structures we are presented with glasshouses and garden rooms and many ways to utilise space-saving storage attractively. Water is given due attention and often sited to complete a garden with the use of rills, pools and fountains. When discussing planting we look at how to set atmosphere with styles such as Mediterranean, cottage garden and minimalist. Also considered is the relationship of plants to each other and their environment. Maintenance of the garden is also a priority, with ideas to reduce upkeep and increase productivity.

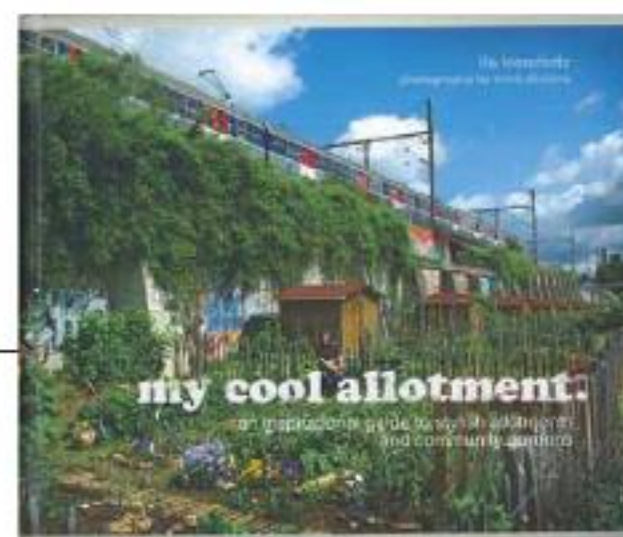
Although Andrew Wilson focuses on the small garden, his clear and practical principles of design apply to gardens of any size.

Mat Reese is a writer and Kew-trained professional gardener

book offer

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MY COOL ALLOTMENT

by Lia Leendertz

Pavilion Books, £14.99

ISBN 978-1862059665

This book visits 31 different allotments, community gardens and private plots. Each one is profiled with a brief introduction to plot and plot holder followed by 'growing notes' and accompanied by colourful and sunny photographs. The book also visits the plots of presenter Alys Fowler and garden designer Cleve West, as well as those of the book's author (Lia Leendertz) and photographer (Mark Diacono).

Don't expect much in the way of practical advice. This isn't a book that tells you what or how to grow on an allotment. Instead, it is perfect for flicking through while on a tea break from gardening.

While not denying the interest of some of the more traditional allotments, more 'cool' to me were the ones that featured alternative ways of growing: communal allotmenting, forest gardening and permaculture or people growing more unusual exotic crops and artisans growing for end products.

My Cool Allotment provides an interesting snapshot of allotments at a time when they are in great demand yet are under increasing threat from urban development. The book captures the spirit and variety of allotmenting right now. Read it, see how other people are doing it, and find inspiration.

Sui Kee Searle is a freelance writer specialising in gardening

book offer

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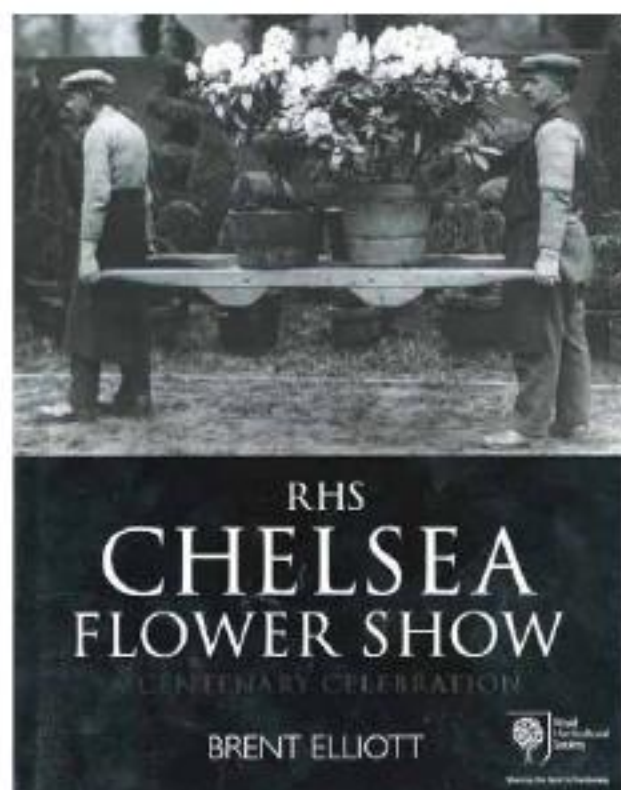
price £12.99 including p&p.

RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW: A CENTENARY CELEBRATION

by Brent Elliott

Frances Lincoln, £25

ISBN 978-0711234512



As historian to the RHS, with all the treasures of the Lindley Library at his disposal, Brent Elliott surely has the best job in the world. Now it's payback time. To mark 100 years since the first Chelsea Flower Show, he has been required, in the manner of a Poet Laureate, to produce a souvenir 'centenary celebration' of the Show.

If this has been an unwelcome labour, it doesn't show. The text crackles with his customary wry wit, and is peppered with glorious nuggets, such as the niche market in garden furniture made from broken-up warships. The illustrations are especially rich, from flat-capped Edwardian workmen manoeuvring impossibly vast rocks, to an array of beautiful posters from the 30s; from optimistic ads for greenhouses ('Erected in 30 minutes') to a wide-eyed two-year-old astonished by a phalanx of soaring delphiniums. How bleak and bricky the gardens of the 1970s look now. How far the intricate mini-gardens of today have come from the mountainous mounds of bloom of the early 60s.

This is not the place to look for a critical account – either of the RHS, which has not always covered itself with glory, or from the 'insiders' who contribute cameos to the book – though Diarmuid Gavin gets a pasting, and Rosy Hardy proves bracingly non-PC. But the value of the book is twofold.

First it shows how Chelsea has always both led and reflected the wider gardening world. In 1913, the key exhibitors were seedsmen and wealthy landowners; today the media and celebrity garden designer rule the roost. Chelsea has presided over the rise and fall of the rock garden, the arrival of the outdoor room, the demise of bedding and the cult of the perennial – only the skill and dedication of generations of nurserymen remains constant.

Then, there is Elliott's splendid assembly of fascinating asides – on water features, futuristic tools, or garden buildings, through which we can trace the oddest fads and fashions. Whatever possessed seating designers in the 80s?

The book ends with a line-up of current designers, divided into pre-and post-millennium. Who knows how they will compare with luminaries like Sylvia Crowe and Russell Page, whose Chelsea triumphs remained modestly anonymous?

Ambra Edwards is a writer specialising in gardens

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Other recently released books for gardeners



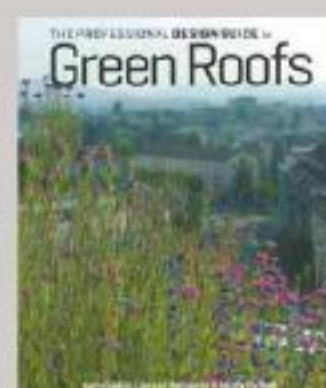
DESIGN GROW SELL

by Sophie Davies

Brightword Publishing, £12.99

ISBN 978-1908003393

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THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGN GUIDE TO GREEN ROOFS

by Karla Dakin, Lisa Lee

Benjamin and Mindy Pantiel

Timber Press, £30

ISBN 978-1604693126

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by Kirsty McLeod

Yale University Press, £30

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by Angelica Gray

Frances Lincoln, £20

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Letters

Have your say – we'd like to hear your views, so please write to us at: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, or email letters@gardensillustrated.com

Star letter

Plight of the bumblebee

I thoroughly endorse Steve Alton's comments in the March 2013 issue that we should all grow more insect-friendly flowers whether they are natives or not. Perhaps I would comment that generally, but not exclusively, plant species rather than more modern hybrids are most likely to appeal. This shouldn't be surprising since Angiosperms or flowering plants, evolved in an adaptive, almost symbiotic fashion with insects. I do think we gardeners should consider this inherent insect/flower relationship more carefully when deciding which flowers to grow.

Encouraging all gardeners to be more acute in looking out for insect-friendly flowers in their own plot might lead to a better database for all gardeners to exploit, and perhaps eventually drive the plant breeders to select cultivars that are more appealing to our native insects. The plight of bees demonstrates that they need all the help that they can get from us.

Julian Wormald, Carmarthenshire

HARDINESS RATINGS

False start

A recent issue showcased that you would be including USDA hardiness information for plants profiled in upcoming editions, which sounded like a very good idea.

Reading further I noticed that many of the plants given a USDA rating were considered to be USDA 8b-9a. Living in a USDA 5 region where these plants do well, I am confused and concerned that someone might well avoid using some wonderful plants, believing wrongly that such plants might not survive in their climate. I hope you can clear this up and reassure all of us in your American fan club.

Andy Durbidge, New York State

ED'S REPLY: This is one of several letters pointing out that we had some teething problems with our new USDA hardiness ratings. These have now been sorted out, and we apologise for the confusion.

BUYING PLANTS

Having it all

Brava! Your February issue was superb, touching on so many topics from cover to

cover. I always flip to the back of the magazine first, savouring the insightful words of Frank Ronan. I wholeheartedly agree with his comments on wanting it all, and yes, at a vibrant 57 I find myself feeling the same way. I have to breathe deep and allow this 'dissolving madness' to go. I sometimes close my eyes and see the blooming garden, pollen saturating the air, alive with bumblebees. That's all I need when I look out the window at the leafless branches of winter. I am comforted that all will return in a colourful, glorious spring.

Kimberly Childers, Sonoma County, California

BOTANICAL ART

Flowering vegetables

Congratulations on featuring the work of Natasha Clutterbuck in your February issue. It is so refreshing to see contemporary botanical art, especially showcasing vegetables. I am a botanical artist living in France where I am creating a potager in my old bergerie in Provence. This gives me the opportunity of not only having fantastic fresh produce for the kitchen but also portraying the fruits of my labours, such as the intricate flowers of the aubergine and courgette.

Patricia Newman, by email

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TALKING POINT

Louisa Jones responds to February's column on the quality of British gardens.



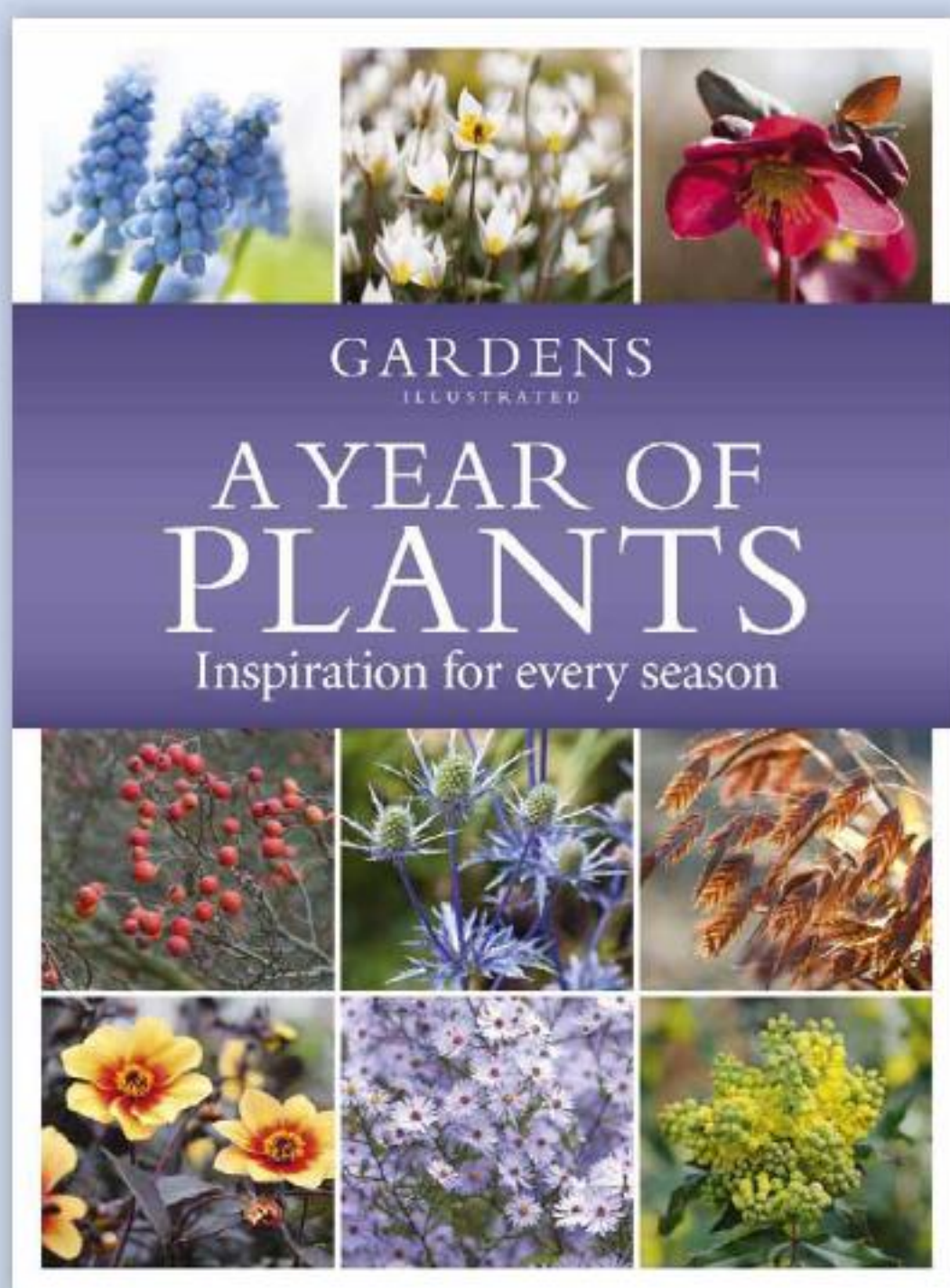
Louisa Jones is an author and journalist with special knowledge of gardens in the Provence region of France.

Rosemary Alexander compares modern British with 'continental gardens' [issue 194, page 111]. I can only speak for French and Mediterranean gardens. Beyond Paris is a great surge of country gardening, where wildlife and ecology – something akin to the Sheffield School – have become mainstream, protecting local ecosystems like local cheeses. For many Brits, gardens equal flowering plants, so it is true that the horticultural palette is much greater in Britain. But modern French gardens, especially in the less industrialised south, stay linked to landscapes. They perpetuate the garden as a contemporary model for good living – frugal and fruitful, ecologically sound, a place for both individual creativity and community sharing. Rosemary writes: 'The many innovative ideas seen at Chelsea and copied internationally still keep the Brits ahead of the rest'. I know few French gardeners who follow Chelsea, much less take inspiration from it. Is diversity not valuable in gardening models?

• What's your view? Write to us by post or email (details above). We reserve the right to edit letters.

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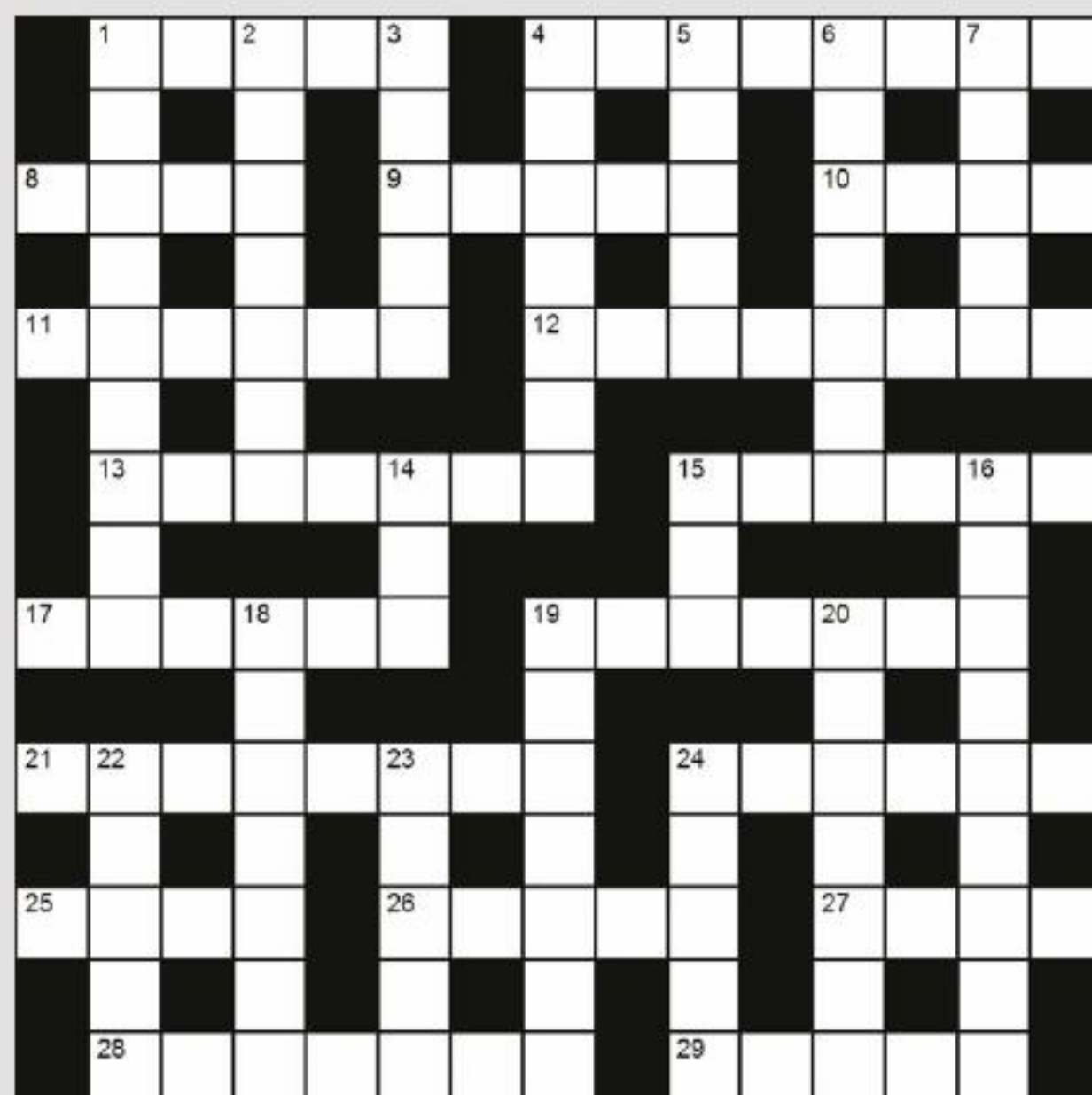
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Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Taxonomic grouping when sun for example returns! (5)
 4 Common woodland flower *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (8)
 8 Hatch a plan for a garden area? (4)
 9 Distinguishing characteristic – it's involved with art (5)
 10 Umbelliferous plant genus – found in loam, mixed (4)
 11 Wizard name for a purple-flowering *Dierama* (6)
 12/22 Derogatory do-gooder's name for *Dicentra* (8,5)
 13 Type of plant disease – shaped like a *Sempervivum* leaf cluster? (7)
 15 Like a palmate leaf – partly clipped at edge (6)
 17 Tomato that fruits early – does as arranged (6)
 19 Atmospheric conditions spoilt wreath around end of June (7)
 21 Great English plant-hunter, when soil disturbed (1,1,6)
 24 Marsh marigold genus – from tropical Thailand (6)
 25 Date tree little Pamela left inside? (4)
 26 Fence supports top of sapling in plant containers (5)
 27 See 6dn.

- 28 Creeping plant – for a caravan? (7)
 29 Use a bug gun for small flower arrangement (5)

DOWN

- 1 Common name for *Solidago* (6,3)
 2 Irritating weeds – often found near docks (7)
 3 *Godetia* is known as the '___ flower' (5)
 4 Thorny bush – produced by botanist, initially, on hike (7)
 5 Release tangle, say, from twisted petunia (ends removed) (5)
 6/27 Rhizomatous plant with 'hairy' petals – *Iberis* dared to change (7,4)
 7 Citrus fruit on elm, surprisingly (5)
 14 Rose might be after this plant grown for its refreshing qualities (3)
 15 Start to peel each little vegetable (3)
 16 The red-hot poker's hot – I'll cry out! (5-4)
 18 Ask Mimi about an Asiatic shrub with aromatic leaves (7)
 19 A flavoursome broad bean, Savill Garden location (7)
 20 Sir Harold, horticulturist – colder with top off! (7)
 22 See 12ac.
 23 It helps protect a flower-bud ... in greenhouse palm (5)
 24 Worms might well leave these (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

APRIL'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 *Erysimum* 6 *Comice* 9 *Edward* 10 *Leathery* 11 *Opal* 12 *Yield* 13 *Numb* 14/15 *Dutch hoe* 16 *Nutgall* 22 *Ehret* 24 *Salt* 26 *Graft* 28 *Buff* 29 *Starwort* 30 *London* 31 *Greens* 32 *Replants*.

DOWN: 2 *Red spider* 3/19 *Scarlet runners* 4 *Muddy* 5 *Mullein* 6 *Chard* 7 *Mahonia* 8 *Carum* 17 *Toe* 18 *Late frost* 20 *Nut tree* 21 *Scatter* 23 *Robinia* 25 *Aster* 26 *Grows* 27 *Tulip*.

BUYING SINGLE ISSUES

GARDENS

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MARCH 2013

How to grow cut flowers all year round; planting ideas for stylish pots; creating a nuttury; ideas for low-maintenance gardens; nine of the best lawnmowers.



APRIL 2013

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Great Gardens to Visit – Chelsea Special

As we're celebrating Chelsea and in the height of spring with the days growing brighter, there's no better time get out and plan your garden visits for 2013. Some truly marvellous gardens dot these isles of ours, a stunning selection of which you can find below.

1. BATSFORD ARBORETUM

Discover glades of wildflowers and magnolias and marvel at thousands of white handkerchief-like bracts on our *Davidia* – in full bloom this month. There's freshly baked food in the Garden Terrace Café, gifts galore, vintage finds in the Applestore and a well-stocked Garden Shop and Plant Centre. Book now for *The Big Batsford Bat Walk* on 23 May and *Kids Gardening – Get the Gardening Bug* on 29 May. Open daily 10am to 5pm.



ADDRESS **Batsford, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9AB**
TEL **01386 701441** WEBSITE **www.batsarb.co.uk**

2. WATERPERRY GARDENS

Eight acres of beautiful ornamental gardens with a fascinating history. Established as a School of Horticulture for Ladies by Beatrix Havergal in 1932, Miss H won some 15 gold medals for her 'Royal Sovereign' strawberries at Chelsea. Today you can lose yourself in the wonderful gardens featuring herbaceous nursery stock beds from which cuttings are taken for plants sold in the Plant Centre. Staying true to its roots Waterperry also has a wide variety of gardening and arts courses.



ADDRESS **Waterperry, Near Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1JZ**
TEL **01844 339254** WEBSITE **www.waterperrygardens.co.uk**

3. THE GARDEN SHOWS AT STANSTED PARK (7–9 JUNE) & LOSELEY PARK (19–21 JULY)

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4. COMPTON ACRES

Compton Acres are famous for their ten acres of beautiful gardens. The grand Italian Garden has a large formal pond with fountains, statues and colourful bedding. See the waterfalls in the natural Wooded Valley and visit the Bog Garden, which is a haven for wildlife. Walk through the Heather Garden to the world-renowned authentic Japanese Garden, which is full of vibrant colour in late spring.



ADDRESS **Poole, Dorset BH13 7ES**
TEL **01202 700778** WEBSITE **www.comptonacres.co.uk**

5. HEVER CASTLE

Romantic 13th-century, double-moated castle, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, nestling in the heart of Kent. Explore the quintessential English garden with glorious formal and natural landscape including topiary, walled rose garden with over 4,000 roses, magnificent classical statuary, fountains, grottoes, lake, yew and water mazes. Shops, restaurants and special events include Rose Week and Country Life at the Castle.



ADDRESS **Hever Castle, Kent TN8 7NG**
TEL **01732 865224** WEBSITE **www.hevercastle.co.uk**

6. BODENHAM ARBORETUM

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ADDRESS **Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 5TB**
TEL **01562 852444** WEBSITE **www.bodenham-arboretum.co.uk**

7. THE BISHOP'S PALACE

Beautiful medieval palace surrounded by 14 acres of picturesque gardens full of specimen trees, roses, perennials, a unique Bishop's Dahlia Border, well pools, wild arboretum with picnic area and Community Garden. A 'must-see' in the historic city of Wells. Available for weddings.



ADDRESS **Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD**

TEL **01749 988111** WEB www.bishopspalace.org.uk

8. MELBOURNE HALL GARDENS

Melbourne Hall Gardens is an 18th-century-style garden with fine statuary, decorative pools, a yew tunnel and Robert Bakewell's famous wrought iron arbour known as The Birdcage. Rare and unusual plants and shrubs abound in this unique garden. Once home to Victorian Prime Minister, Viscount Melbourne who gave his name to Melbourne in Australia.



ADDRESS **Melbourne, Derbyshire DE73 8EN**

TEL **01332 862502** WEB www.melbournehall.com

10. SUDELEY CASTLE

Ancient trees and parkland lead from the hills of the Cotswold into the award-winning gardens of Sudeley Castle. Lady Ashcombe has collaborated with top garden designers to create a variety of themed gardens. For many, the highlight is the Queens Garden's formal topiary and old-fashioned rose varieties. Formed on an original Elizabethan parterre, it is at its best during Rose Week, when billowing blossom and abundant scents delight the senses. By contrast, natural planting and curtains of clematis surround the medieval Banqueting Hall and ancient mulberry tree. Plants have descriptive labels and garden lovers may wish to join a guided Garden Tour to learn more. Sudeley Castle gardens are an ever-evolving showcase of shape, form and colour, complementing and enhancing their historic setting.

ADDRESS **Winchcombe, Gloucestershire GL54 5JD**

TEL **01242 602308** WEB www.sudeleycastle.co.uk



9. PENSTHORPE WILDLIFE & GARDENS

Pensthorpe contains three inspirational gardens to provide year-round colour and interest. The Gardens offer unparalleled delights; from the structural beauty of the Millennium Garden, designed by world renowned plantsman Piet Oudolf, to the innovative Wave Line Garden.



ADDRESS **Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN**

TEL **01328 851465** WEB www.pensthorpe.com



11. MOUNT STUART

Mount Stuart is renowned for its 300 acres of spectacular gardens and grounds which, due to the gulf-stream effect, feature an abundance of unusual plants from Asia, the southern hemisphere and many other parts of the world. Explore the Rock Garden, Wee Garden, Kitchen Garden and Pinetum to enjoy the very best Scotland has to offer.

ADDRESS **Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute PA20 9LR**
TEL **01700 503877** WEB www.mountstuart.com



12. ABBEYWOOD GARDENS

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ADDRESS **Delamere, Cheshire CW8 2HS**
TEL **01606 301374** WEB www.abbeywoodgardenscheshire.co.uk



13. ABERGLASNEY GARDENS

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ADDRESS **Llangathen, Carmarthenshire SA32 8QH**
TEL **01558 668998** WEB www.aberglasney.org



14. ABBOTSBURY SUBTROPICAL GARDENS

Winner of the HHA/ Christie's Garden of the Year Award in 2012 and described by Alan Titchmarsh as "one of the finest gardens I have ever visited". Located in Dorset near Weymouth, these gardens are now one of the best in the Country. Famous for camellias, magnolias and stunning spring colour. Open 10am to 5/6pm, 7 days except for Christmas and New Year.

ADDRESS **Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Dorset DT3 4LA**
TEL **01305 871387** WEB www.abbotsburygardens.co.uk



15. KELMARSH HALL & GARDENS

Vibrant displays of peonies will greet visitors to Kelmarsh Hall Gardens this May. See the rose garden come to life in June and July and admire the cut flower borders during August and September. Refreshments available in the tea room.
What's on: Hardy Plant Fair, May 6 – 7, – 10am to 4pm

ADDRESS **Kelmarsh Hall, Kelmarsh, Northampton NN6 9LY**
TEL **01604 686543** WEB www.kelmarsh.com



16. BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

Fifteen acres of tranquil landscaped gardens, close to city centre, featuring 7,000 plants, shrubs and trees including rare species. Features include four glasshouses; Lawn Aviary; children's playground; art gallery, tearoom, car park and shop. Open air entertainment during the summer.

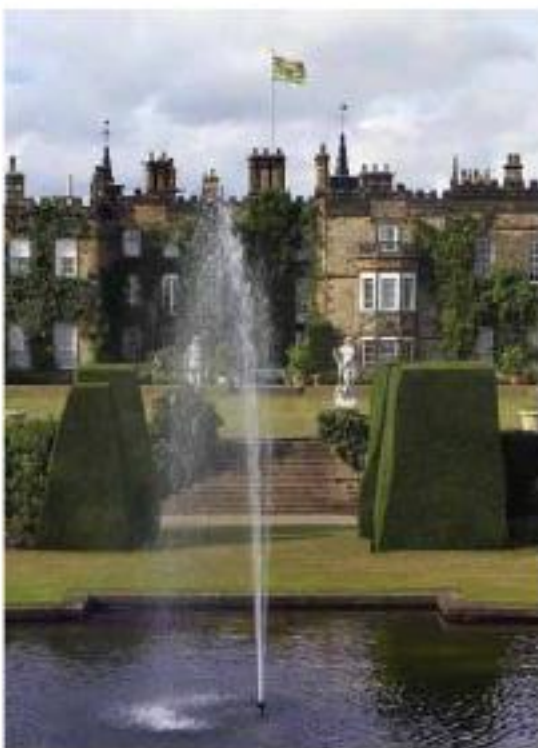
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17. TRENTHAM GARDENS

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ADDRESS **Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8JG**
TEL **01782 646646** WEB www.trentham.co.uk



18. RENISHAW HALL & GARDENS

Renishaw Hall and Gardens is a truly beautiful place to visit. Home to the Sitwell family for nearly 400 years, current owner Alexandra Sitwell invites you to visit her home and the gardens for which Renishaw is so famous. Italianate in their influence, the gardens feature seasonal highlights including magnolias, bluebells and delphiniums. Fascinating Hall tours show how the history of the family is filled with writers, innovators and eccentrics.

ADDRESS **Renishaw, Derbyshire S21 3WB**
TEL **01246 432310** WEB www.renishaw-hall.co.uk



19. NESS BOTANIC GARDENS

Ness Gardens announces the return of the BBC Radio 4 *Gardeners' Question Time* Summer Garden Party on Saturday 7 September 2013, following the outstanding success of last year's event. New for 2013: The Garden Kitchen café and Garden Kiosk together with our newly refurbished gift shop and plant sales. Gardens open 10am to 5pm.

ADDRESS **Ness, Neston, South Wirral CH64 4AY**
TEL **0845 030 4063** WEB www.nessgardens.org.uk

20. HAREWOOD HOUSE & GARDENS

There are over 100 acres of award-winning gardens at Harewood, full of variety with plants from around the world, all in the setting of glorious 'Capability' Brown landscape. Explore the magnificent terrace with its herbaceous and tropical borders, the alpine beauty of the Himalayan garden, and the picturesque lakeside walk to the walled garden full of heritage fruit and vegetables.



ADDRESS **Harewood, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 9LG**
TEL **0113 218 1010** WEB www.harewood.org



21. EXBURY GARDENS

A spectacular 200-acre woodland garden showcasing the world-famous Rothschild Collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, rare trees and shrubs. Enchanting river walks, ponds and cascades. Daffodil Meadow, Rock, Heather and Bog Gardens and exotic plantings and herbaceous borders ensure year-round interest. Stunning autumn colour and display of *Nerine sarniensis* in the Gallery. A 1¼-mile steam railway is a great favourite with visitors of all ages.

ADDRESS **Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ**
TEL **023 8089 1203** WEB www.exbury.co.uk

Visit Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is a county rich with incredible garden visits sure to satisfy the needs of any horticultural enthusiast. Make sure these fantastic gardens below are top of your list of must-sees.

1. UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN

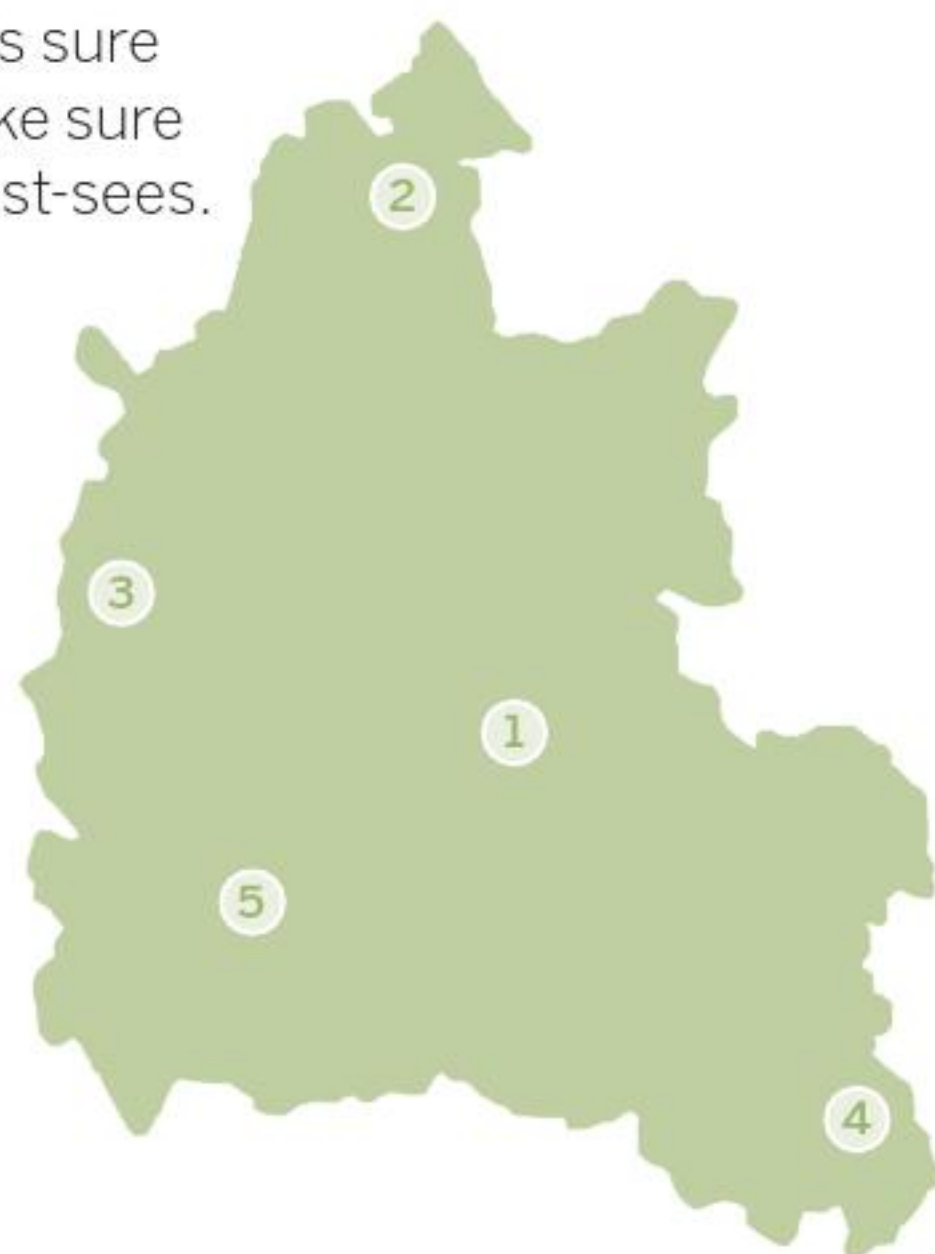
Visit inspiring herbaceous borders, glasshouses that take you around the world, or simply relax in the oldest botanic garden in Britain.

The Oxford Botanic Garden is the most compact, yet diverse collection of plants in the world, right in the heart of the city centre, and is open throughout the year for you to visit and enjoy.



ADDRESS **High St, Oxford, OX1 4AZ**

TEL **01865 286690** WEB www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk



2. BROUGHTON CASTLE

The formal garden features fleur-de-lys shaped box hedges planted with roses and many old-fashioned varieties of shrubs. There are four herbaceous borders planted with more roses, shrubs and a variety of perennial plants. Groups are welcome throughout the year by appointment, but the garden is also open to the public from 1 May until 15 September on Wednesdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays (2–5pm), plus Thursdays in July and August.



ADDRESS **Broughton, Banbury, OX15 5EB**

TEL **01295 276070** WEBSITE www.broughtoncastle.com

3. COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK & GARDENS

The stunning gardens and themed borders, such as the cactus borders, prairie-style planting, wildflower meadows, tree ferns, bananas and mature trees including a Giant Wellingtonia and many old Oak trees make a beautiful backdrop to the animals. "The exotic planting in the old walled garden is amongst the best in Britain." Stephen Lacey, *The Daily Telegraph*



ADDRESS **Burford, OX18 4JP**

TEL **01993 823006** WEBSITE www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk



4. STONOR PARK

The walled garden rises up behind the ancient manor house of Stonor. The garden is divided between the original pleasure garden with 17th-century terraces and two ponds, and the old kitchen garden replanted in the 1980s. Climbing the terrace stages there is a long mixed border, ending with a Japanese garden house built by the 5th Lord Camoys after his visit to Kyoto in 1906.

ADDRESS **Stonor, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6HF**

TEL **01491 638587** WEBSITE www.stonor.com



5. BUSCOT PARK

The gardens and pleasure grounds at Buscot Park are one of Oxfordshire's best-kept secrets. Designed in the late 18th century to complement the Palladian style house, the grounds were considerably enhanced in the 20th century by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lords Faringdon. They include the spectacular water garden designed by Harold Peto and the Four Seasons Walled Garden. Open 29 March – 30 September, Monday–Friday 2–6pm and some weekends including Bank Holidays.

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The big push

In which our columnist must finally get started on his fruit garden

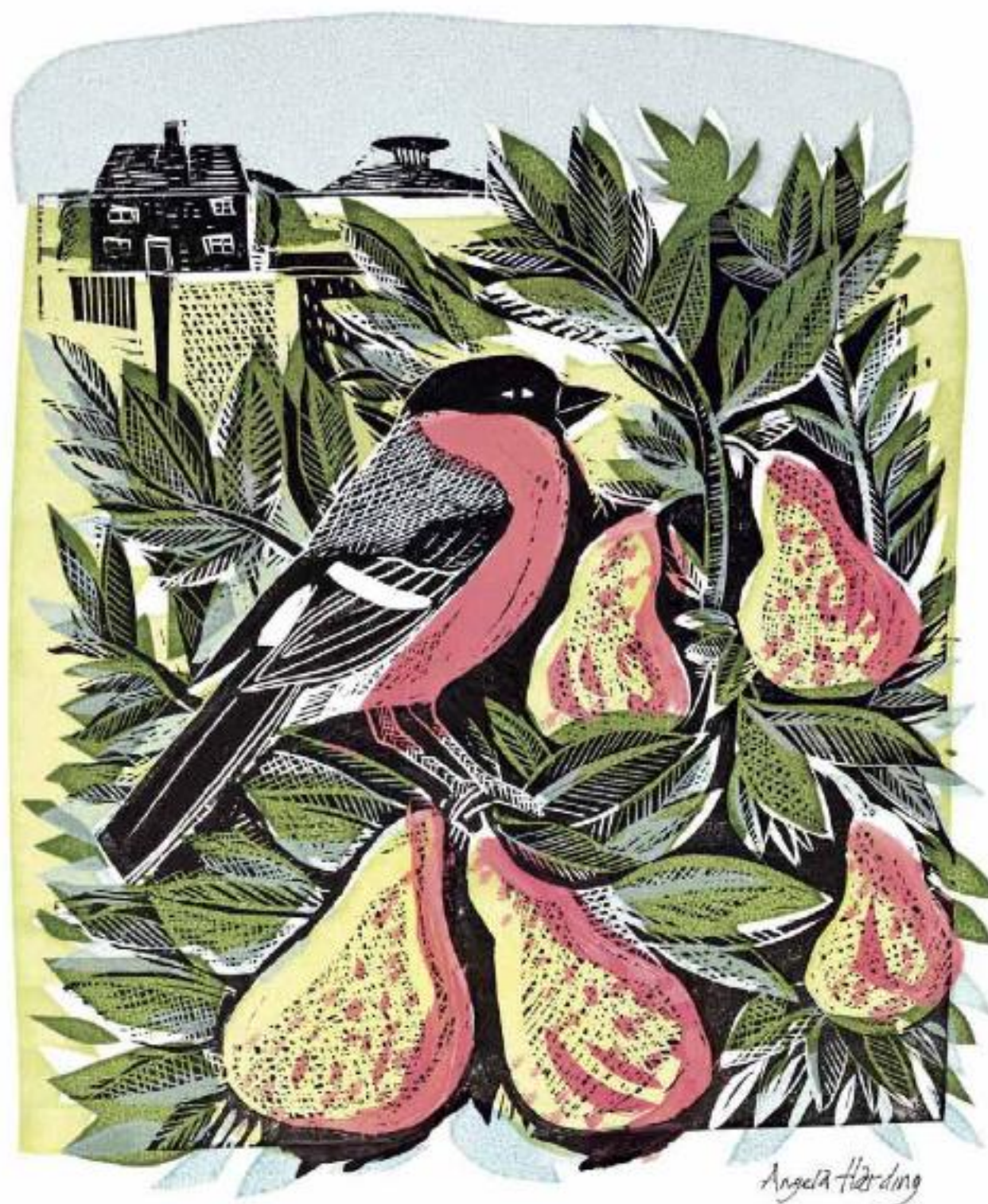
WORDS FRANK RONAN ILLUSTRATION ANGELA HARDING

We may, at last, be about to make the fruit garden. Eleven years or so since I first scanned that piece of ground and decided to put it there and an eleven year pile of fruit tree catalogues later. In summer, when the raspberries arrive at the greengrocer, I, grimacing at the increasing price of them and the decreasing size of their containers, kick myself and resolve to have them underway by next year. Meanwhile a pile of earth destined to fill raised beds swells to the size of a neolithic tumulus and sprouts some of the most vigorous and beautiful weeds I have ever seen.

It is the last great eyesore in the garden, now that the greenhouse is gone, but it is remarkable how easily an eyesore is overlooked when you have how it should be in your mind's eye, and you are seeing, not what is there, but refinements and adjustments to your plan. And every time you think of an improvement to the scheme you think to yourself, 'It is just as well I hadn't started it yet, or it wouldn't be nearly as nice.' And so the happiness of procrastination continues.

Until, that is, it is the last part of the garden and then it must be done. And still you cling to it, perhaps because when it is finished you will lose your excuses. Other parts that you have neglected a little will suddenly cry out for attention. A certain lack of maintainance can be forgiven in a garden under construction, but a garden made must be a garden maintained, with no leeway for sloppiness. Will it, you worry, be that, once it is finished, you cease to be the garden's maker and become the garden's servant?

We'll soon find out. But I am assuming that any psychological disadvantage will be outweighed by the joy of not having to buy raspberries. More than that, the whole design of the fruit garden has evolved on sybaritic



"A garden made must be a garden maintained, with no leeway for sloppiness"

principles. It is to be a square, three sides of which, all except the south, are to be a continuous raised bed. The back of this bed will be girded with trained pears, apples and gages on wooden frames, and the inner part will contain the raspberries and currants and gooseberries. The idea is that the whole thing makes a south-facing sun-trap. The middle can be paved, and two hammocks will be slung in it, in which one can recline with cushions and a novel and occasionally extend a hand to pluck a berry.

We did have a summer once when it was nice to lie in a hammock (2003 I think), and I assume we will have one again. I am also assuming that if I get the

variety right I will be able to grow a gage that fruits up here. It may be that if I plant a delicious old one I also put in a modern reliable to pollinate it. For pears, my fingers are tightly crossed that the 'Doyenné du Comice' will condescend to be happy, because it is so superior to any other that I would still be buying them if I grew an alternative. It will need 'Concorde' or something to pollinate it in any case. Apples present no problem at all. This is apple country and there are so many good ones to choose from you can almost go by looks alone.

Damsons will line the space between the path and the hedgerow on the south side. It seems natural since they grow in the hedges here anyway, and I even know a hedge made of them nearby. A quince or two would be fantastic, but I haven't worked out how to accommodate them in the scheme. There won't be room for mulberries or medlars or anything that can't get by without spreading its elbows, and we are too cold for figs or apricots or peaches. Whatever may grow there are walls to build first, and then we may begin. □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

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